



Dhaka Delights



A Culinary Journey Through Old Dhaka

Centuries of Dhakaite food traditions,
Mughal influence, and street-side flavor



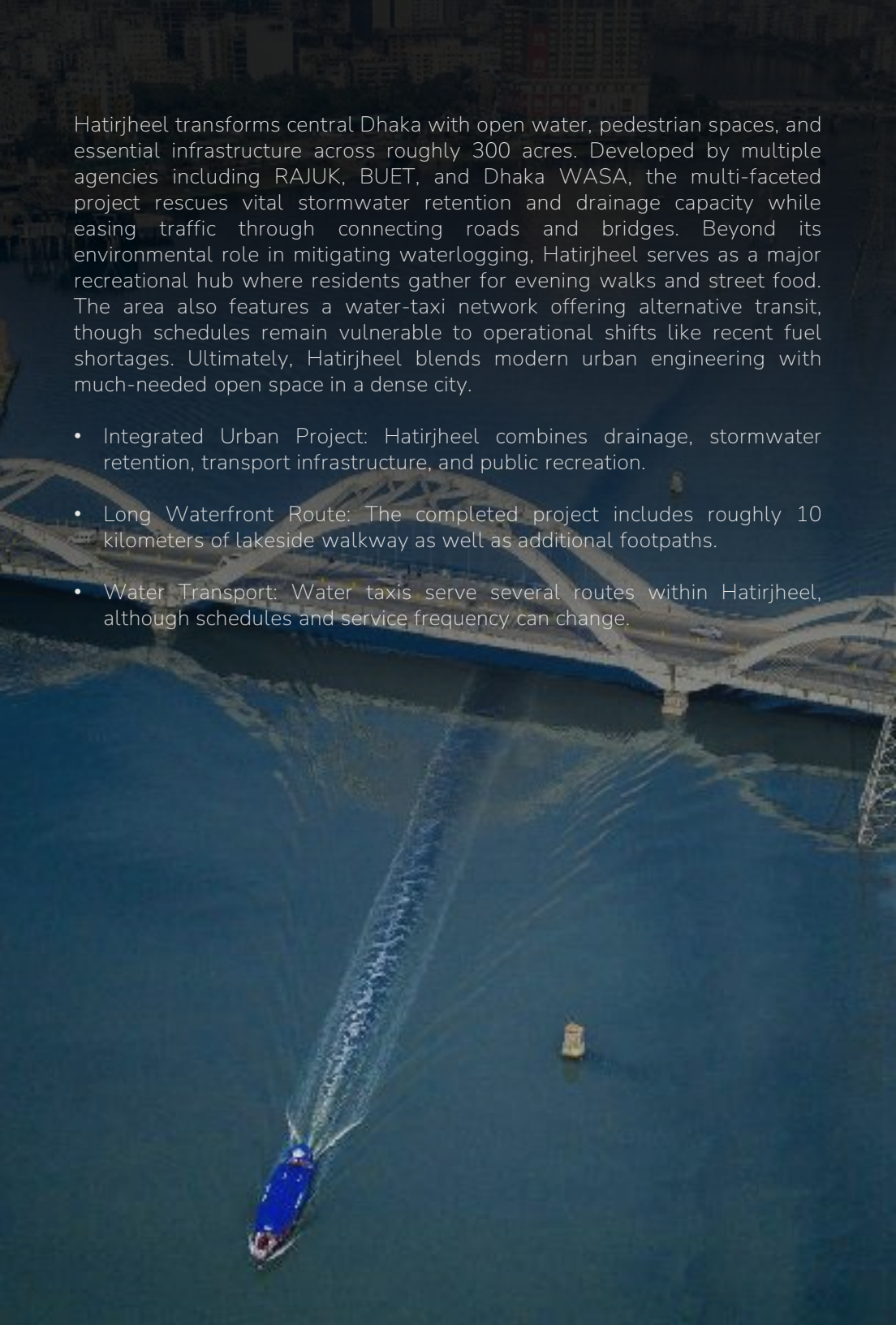
Old Dhaka's culinary identity blends Mughal, Persianate, and South Asian traditions within its historic lanes and markets. Rice and meat dishes anchor this heritage, highlighted by Haji Biryani's famous Kataribhog rice and mustard oil preparation, traditionally wrapped in jackfruit leaves. The neighborhood also offers kebabs, rich curries, and the iconic, crisp Mughal-era bread, Bakarkhani. During Ramadan, Chawkbazar's centuries-old iftar market comes alive with seasonal stalls and signature delicacies like Boro Baper Polay Khay. Ultimately, exploring Old Dhaka's food is a cultural experience rooted in multi-generational family recipes, bustling streets, and shared community rituals.

- **Historic Food Culture:** Old Dhaka's cuisine reflects Mughal and wider Persianate influences that local cooks adapted into a distinctive Dhakaite tradition.
- **Haji Biryani:** Documented preparation uses short-grain Kataribhog rice, goat meat, mustard oil, and aromatic spices.
- **Ramadan Tradition:** Chawkbazar's iftar market has operated for more than a century and remains one of Old Dhaka's best-known seasonal food traditions.

Hatirjheel Waterfront

Water, movement,
& public space in modern Dhaka



An aerial photograph of a large, multi-arched bridge spanning a wide body of water. In the foreground, a blue boat is moving away from the viewer, leaving a white wake. The water is a deep blue-grey color. The bridge has several concrete arches and a road deck. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a clear sky.

Hatirjheel transforms central Dhaka with open water, pedestrian spaces, and essential infrastructure across roughly 300 acres. Developed by multiple agencies including RAJUK, BUET, and Dhaka WASA, the multi-faceted project rescues vital stormwater retention and drainage capacity while easing traffic through connecting roads and bridges. Beyond its environmental role in mitigating waterlogging, Hatirjheel serves as a major recreational hub where residents gather for evening walks and street food. The area also features a water-taxi network offering alternative transit, though schedules remain vulnerable to operational shifts like recent fuel shortages. Ultimately, Hatirjheel blends modern urban engineering with much-needed open space in a dense city.

- **Integrated Urban Project:** Hatirjheel combines drainage, stormwater retention, transport infrastructure, and public recreation.
- **Long Waterfront Route:** The completed project includes roughly 10 kilometers of lakeside walkway as well as additional footpaths.
- **Water Transport:** Water taxis serve several routes within Hatirjheel, although schedules and service frequency can change.

A close-up view of the front of a Dhaka Rickshaw. The canopy is covered in a dense, colorful pattern of circular and teardrop shapes in red, green, blue, and yellow. Two large, ornate heart-shaped ornaments hang from the top. Below the canopy, a red banner with white Bengali script is visible. The rickshaw is set against a background of trees.

UNESCO-Recognized Rickshaw Art

High-Color Heritage.
The Moving Galleries of Dhaka.

Rickshaw art is one of Bangladesh's most recognizable forms of urban folk expression. Artists decorate cycle rickshaws with flowers, birds, animals, film imagery, rural scenes, historical subjects, lettering, and colorful ornament.

In 2023, UNESCO inscribed "Rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Dhaka" on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, recognizing the tradition as an important part of Dhaka's cultural identity.

The style developed through workshop practice, apprenticeship, and family traditions, with painters often decorating rear panels and other parts of the vehicle. Today, hand-painted rickshaw art faces pressure from digital printing, motorized transport, and declining demand. However, artists continue to adapt the style to furniture, clothing, household objects, and decorative panels.

- UNESCO Recognition: UNESCO inscribed Rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Dhaka in 2023.
- Moving Folk Art: Decorative themes include flowers, animals, landscapes, films, historical events, national figures, and imaginative scenes.
- Living Craft: Craftspeople transmit rickshaw construction and painting through practical learning, family knowledge, and workshop experience.



A photograph of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (National Parliament Building) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, designed by Louis I. Kahn. The building is a large, rectangular structure with a prominent central section featuring a series of circular and triangular openings. It is situated on a hill, partially obscured by a dense, lush green forest in the foreground. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds. The text "Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban

Louis I. Kahn's monumental work
of modern architecture

Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Bangladesh's National Parliament House in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, is a masterpiece of monumental geometry designed by American architect Louis I. Kahn. Commissioned in 1962 and completed in 1982 after delays from the 1971 Liberation War, the 215-acre complex blends exposed concrete, marble bands, and dramatic geometric openings. At its concentric center sits the Assembly Chamber, surrounded by an artificial lake that makes the heavy structure appear to rise from the water. While visitors can admire the shifting shadows and massive arches from Manik Mia Avenue, interior access requires strict security clearance.

- Louis I. Kahn: The American architect designed the Parliament complex after receiving the formal commission in 1962.
- Geometry and Light: Large geometric openings control sunlight, shade, ventilation, and the visual character of the concrete walls.
- Water Composition: An artificial water body touches the main building and forms part of Kahn's architectural design.



Dhanmondi Lake & Rabindra Sarobar



Waterfront recreation and cultural life
in residential Dhaka

Dhanmondi Lake weaves a three-kilometer ribbon of water, greenery, and public space through one of Dhaka's most prominent residential neighborhoods. Originating from an old river channel, the lake balances stormwater drainage with recreational pathways that draw morning exercisers and evening crowds alike. Rabindra Sarobar anchors the area's cultural life as an open-air stage for music and civic events, complemented by popular street-food vendors offering local snacks. As of 2026, ongoing restoration and waterlogging-management projects mean visitors should expect some maintenance work. Additionally, travelers should note that the former Bangabandhu Memorial Museum near Road 32 was heavily demolished in February 2025 and is no longer an active attraction.

- **Historic Water Channel:** Dhanmondi Lake developed from part of an abandoned channel linked to the old Karwan Bazar river system.
- **Three-Kilometer Lake:** Banglapedia records the lake at approximately 3 kilometers in length.
- **Cultural Venue:** Rabindra Sarobar regularly hosts concerts, festivals, and public cultural programs.



Sadarghat River Port & Buriganga Boat Rides

Dhaka's historic river gateway in a
changing transport era



Sadarghat stands as the historic heart of Dhaka's deep riverine connection to the Buriganga. Developed around nineteenth-century commerce, the Buckland Bund, and landmarks like Ahsan Manzil, the waterfront has long anchored the city's trade and transit. While the opening of the Padma Bridge and improved road networks have reduced daily launch departures from roughly 140 down to 40 or 45, the terminal remains a vibrant, chaotic hub of vessels, workers, and traders. However, heavy industrial and sewage pollution severely strain the river's ecology, and active shipping lanes carry serious safety risks—evidenced by recent collisions. Ultimately, Sadarghat offers an unfiltered glimpse into Dhaka's working river culture, provided visitors prioritize safety over close-up boat rides.

- **Historic Gateway:** Sadarghat has served as a major river landing and commercial district for generations.
- **Changing Passenger Traffic:** Normal daily launch departures have fallen sharply since road connectivity improved.
- **Safety Matters:** Small-boat rides should stay clear of active launch berths and heavy vessel traffic.



The background image is a collage of various Bangladeshi crafts. On the left, there are three cylindrical woven lamps (fajras) with green, yellow, and blue patterns. In the center, there are several terracotta carvings, including a heart-shaped piece with a calligraphic symbol, a circular piece with a calligraphic symbol, and a rectangular piece with a scene of a horse-drawn cart. On the right, there are more woven lamps and a terracotta carving of a person. The overall theme is traditional Bangladeshi craftsmanship.

Shopping for Bangladeshi Crafts

Heritage textiles, artisan traditions, and
contemporary Bangladeshi design

The background image shows a variety of traditional Dhaka crafts. In the center is a large, round, light-brown woven basket with a handle made of thin, dark sticks. To the left is a smaller, dark-colored woven basket. In the foreground, there are several pieces of woven fabric: a blue and white patterned cloth on the left, and a white cloth with a yellow and orange striped pattern on the right. The overall scene is a close-up of these crafts, highlighting their intricate weaving patterns and textures.

Dhaka's vibrant craft traditions bridge centuries-old heritage with contemporary design across the city. Retail platforms like Aarong connect over 87,000 rural artisans, highlighted by its massive Dhanmondi flagship—recognized in 2026 as the World's Largest Craft Store. Meanwhile, brands like Aranya champion plant-based natural dyes. In Old Dhaka, the 400-year-old Shankhari Bazar preserves traditional conch-shell carving, while the broader region remains the historic heartland of UNESCO-listed Jamdani weaving and ongoing revivals of legendary Dhakai Muslin.

- Large Artisan Network: Aarong currently collaborates with more than 87,000 artisans across Bangladesh.
- Jamdani Heritage: UNESCO recognized the Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving in 2013.
- Old Dhaka Craft: Shankhari Bazar preserves a centuries-old tradition of carving conch-shell bangles.



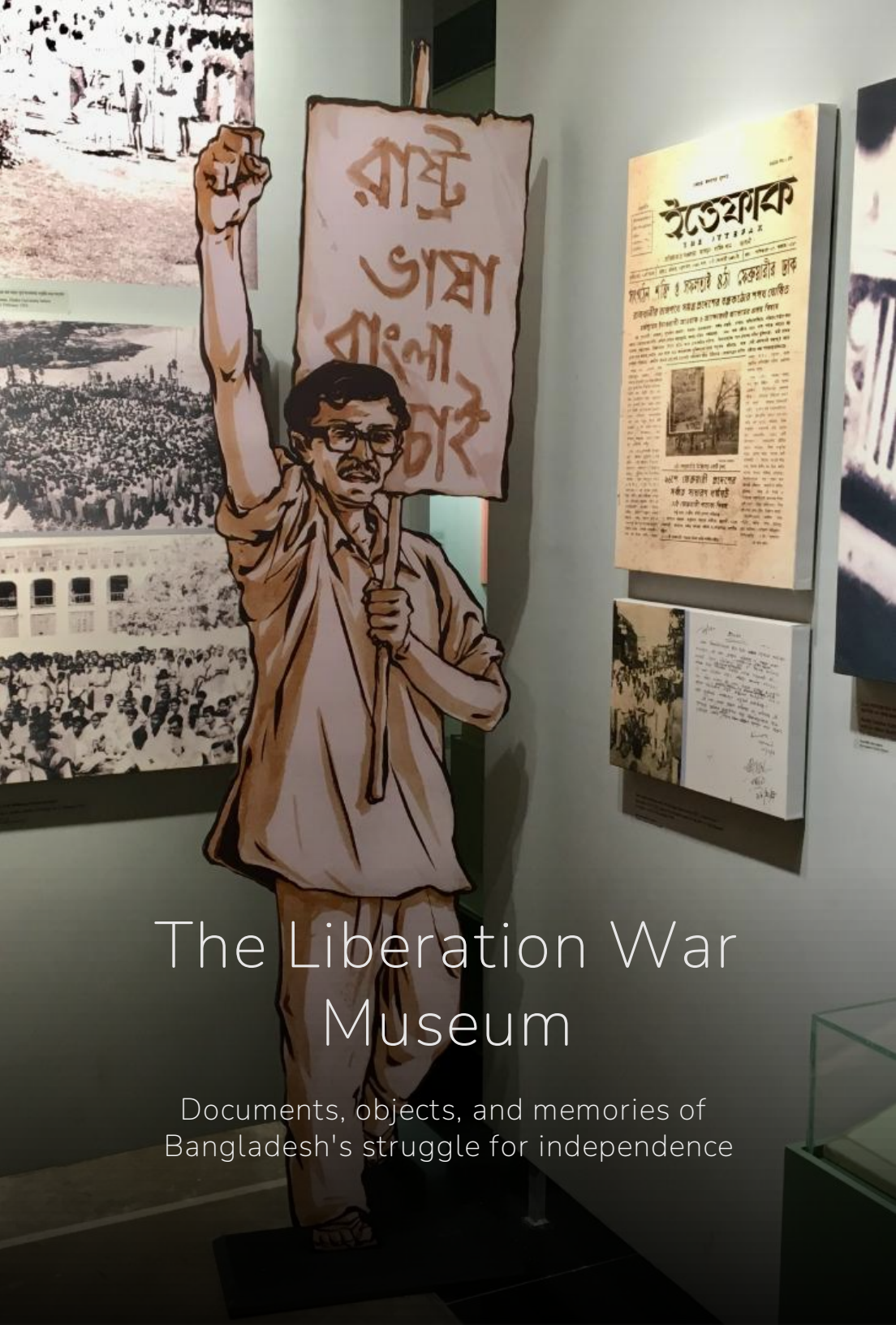
Dhaka University & Charukala

A campus shaped by education, political movements,
architecture, and art

The University of Dhaka, established on July 1, 1921, stands as Bangladesh's premier center for higher education, cultural debate, and political activism—notably driving the 1952 Language Movement and subsequent independence struggles. Its campus features striking architectural landmarks, including Curzon Hall with its distinctive red-brick blend of European and Mughal elements, and the Faculty of Fine Art (Charukala) designed by Muzharul Islam to integrate open spaces with art education. Charukala is also famously known for organizing the grand Bengali New Year procession; although officially renamed Baishakhi Shobhajatra by the government in April 2026, it remains internationally recognized under its UNESCO heritage listing as Mangal Shobhajatra on Pahela Baishakh.

- Founded in 1921: The University of Dhaka opened on July 1, 1921.
- Language Movement: The university played a central role in the 1952 Language Movement.
- Art Heritage: The Faculty of Fine Art traces its origins to Zainul Abedin's Government Institute of Art, established in 1948.



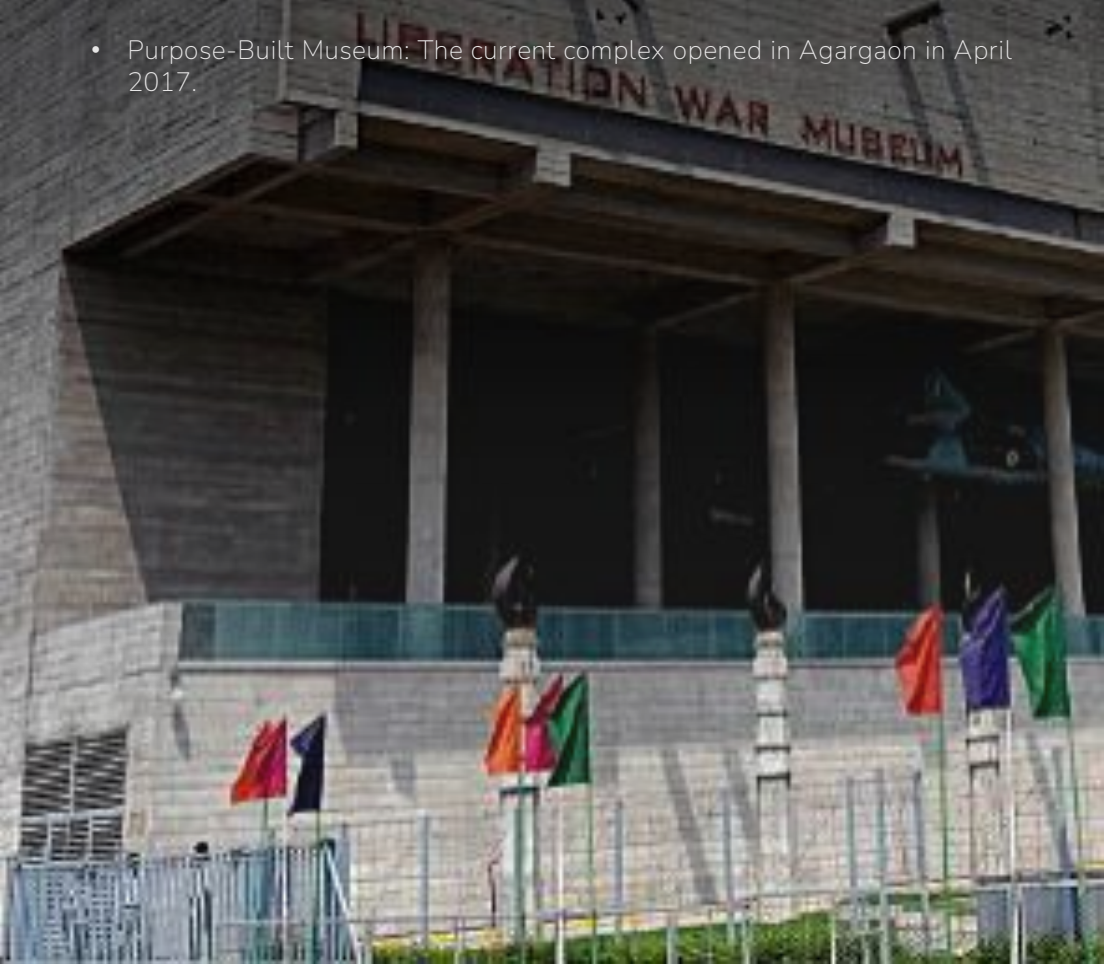


The Liberation War Museum

Documents, objects, and memories of
Bangladesh's struggle for independence

The Liberation War Museum in Agargaon deeply documents Bangladesh's 1971 independence struggle through four comprehensive galleries featuring personal artifacts, photographs, and historical documents. Founded by citizens in 1996 in Segunbagicha, the museum moved to its purpose-built Agargaon complex in 2017. Beyond its exhibition spaces, the facility includes an auditorium, library, research center, and a reflective entrance plaza featuring a water feature and memorial flame. Addressing the profound human cost of the war—marked by millions displaced and an official death toll of three million—the museum stands as a vital institution preserving the historical memory of the nation's birth.

- **Citizen-Led Institution:** Citizens established the museum in 1996, and public fundraising contributed to its development.
- **Four Main Galleries:** The Agargaon museum presents the longer historical background and the events of the 1971 Liberation War across four major galleries.
- **Purpose-Built Museum:** The current complex opened in Agargaon in April 2017.





Shahbagh Flower Market & Kawran Bazar

Flowers before dawn and the
nighttime logistics of a megacity

A woman wearing a vibrant red and black checkered sari and a light blue face mask is the central figure in the foreground. She is holding a white plastic bag, seemingly in the process of purchasing or organizing goods. The market stall around her is overflowing with various items: large white sacks filled with red chili peppers and dried green leaves are prominent in the immediate foreground. Behind these, more sacks contain yellow and orange powders, likely spices. In the background, other market stalls and people are visible, creating a sense of a busy, active marketplace. The overall atmosphere is one of daily commerce and traditional market life.

Shahbagh and Kawran Bazar showcase contrasting sides of Dhaka's vital urban economy through contrasting rhythms of flowers and food. Shahbagh's bustling flower market begins before dawn around 2:00 to 3:00 AM, supplying roses, marigolds, and seasonal blooms from districts like Jashore for celebrations, weddings, and national commemorations. In contrast, Kawran Bazar operates as a massive wholesale hub moving vegetables, fish, and rice with nighttime truck deliveries and thousands of porters. Despite ongoing municipal relocation plans to curb congestion, Kawran Bazar remains actively functional in 2026. Both vibrant working markets offer immersive glimpses into Dhaka's daily trade, provided visitors observe without disrupting the constant flow of goods.

- **Predawn Flowers:** Shahbagh's wholesale flower activity begins in the very early morning, especially during high-demand seasons.
- **Nighttime Food Trade:** Kawran Bazar becomes especially active at night as trucks, traders, buyers, and porters move fresh food through the market.
- **Working Markets:** Both places remain important commercial spaces where visitors should give workers priority.



Bangladesh Tourism Board

Parjatan Bhaban (Level-9),
Plot: E-5, C/1, West Agargaon,
Sher-E Bangla Nagar (Administrative Area),
Dhaka-1207

Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism

Bangladesh Secretariat,
Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka 1000
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