

Pakistan

Dacca



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KARACHI
1962

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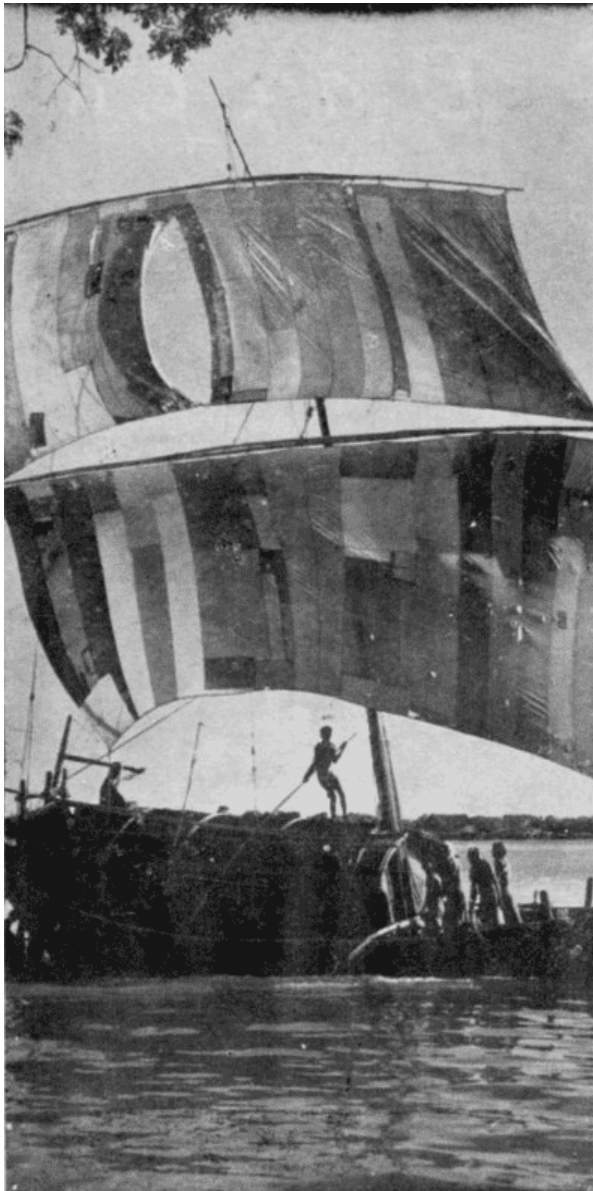
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A Sail Boat

DACCA

Dacca, known the world over as the city of mosques and muslin, has a history going back to the earliest times. The exact date of its foundation is not known, but it is first mentioned in recorded history as the new provincial capital under the Mughal Governor, Islam Khan, who shifted his headquarters here from Rajmahal in 1608 A.D. Much of Dacca's great past is preserved in rich monuments of impressive beauty whose exquisite structural pattern, intricate design and workmanship bear witness to the high standards of art and architecture achieved by the Mughals who ruled here from 1575 to 1707 A.D.

Dacca is also famous for its fine silk and cotton fabrics, particularly for its quality muslin which has been called the luxury fabric of the East. Dacca muslins have been highly prized in England and many other countries of Europe and Western Asia for three centuries and more. These quality fabrics won first prizes at the London Exhibitions of 1851 and 1861, where they fetched fabulous prices from the royalty of Europe. Competition with cheap mill-made cloth and decline of the court tradition have resulted in gradual elimination of the costly varieties, but the art, as such, still survives and tourists can buy the piece of their choice at reasonable rates from many shops and stores in Dacca.

Modern Amenities

Although Dacca is essentially oriental in its outlook and atmosphere, yet it is a truly cosmopolitan city. Side by side with the old Dacca of Mughal mosques and monuments, Buddhist pagodas and monasteries, Hindu temples and shrines, a new Dacca is fast developing—a thriving monument to the comforts and pace of modern living.

The Hotel Shahbagh with its stately marble pillars, stands like a grand mansion, offering most modern amenities. Just across the road the new building of Radio Pakistan rises up from green grounds like a citadel, gleaming white in harmony with the Shahbagh. The sprawling lawns, the

modern swimming pool, the lovely tennis courts, the rich library, the well-stocked cellar and the friendly atmosphere of the Dacca club invite one to laze away an evening in perfect leisure and comfort. Modern cinemas screen latest movies from Hollywood as well as from British and Continental studios. The latest addition is a fully air-conditioned super-structure rising into the sky, with two auditoria, one on top of the other, showing two different films at the same time.

The University Museum is full of precious relics and exhibits. Its library contains latest books in all fields of literature and science as well as rare old editions. In the crowded bazars and market places, tourists and diplomats rub shoulders with the local populace. Smoothly-shaven westerners mingle freely with strikingly handsome bearded Bengalis while the Buddhist monks, wrapped in their saffron robes, stroll nonchalantly along.

The winding, meandering rivers have a life of their own. Dacca's waterfronts are crowded with all kinds of river craft. Yachts, sampans, canoes, motor-launches, fishermen's boats, all bubbling with activity, all going their separate ways.

Art and Culture

Cultural activities form an integral part of Dacca's life. Art exhibitions, concerts of folk and classical music, plays, dramas, dances, seminars and symposia are regular features. Occasionally, big-name stars, orchestras and ballets from abroad also find their way into Dacca. Once in a while tribal troupes from the hill-tracts come down and perform their special dances to large and appreciative audiences. They are all accorded the same warm welcome as visiting celebrities, for art and culture rank high in East Pakistan's social life and talent in these fields is greatly admired and respected.

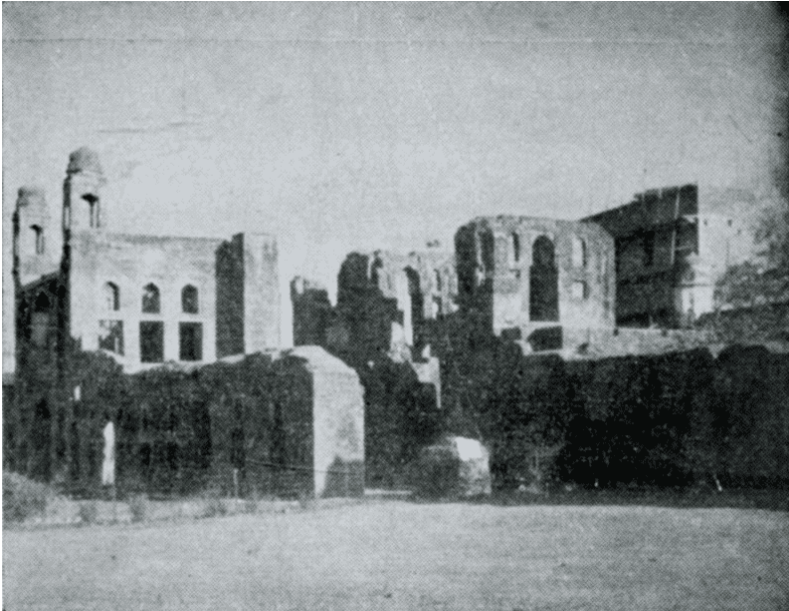


A River Scene

PLACES OF INTEREST

Lalbagh Fort

The fort of Aurangabad, popularly known as the Lalbagh fort, was built in 1678 A.D. by Prince Mohammad Azam, son of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, who was then the Viceroy of Bengal. The fort has a three-storeyed structure with slender minarets at the south gate. It has many hidden passages and a mosque of massive structure.



The Lalbagh Fort

The Tomb of Pari Bibi

Outstanding among the monuments of the Lalbagh Fort is the tomb of Pari Bibi (fairy lady), the daughter of Nawab Shaista Khan who succeeded Prince Mohammad Azam as the Viceroy of Bengal. An interesting feature of this building is that in a land of almost exclusive brickwork this tomb is built

entirely with stone: black basalt from Bihar, grey sandstone from Central India and marble from distant Rajputana. The decorative work in the interior of the building is akin to that of Emperor Humayun's tomb at Delhi and the Taj Mahal at Agra.

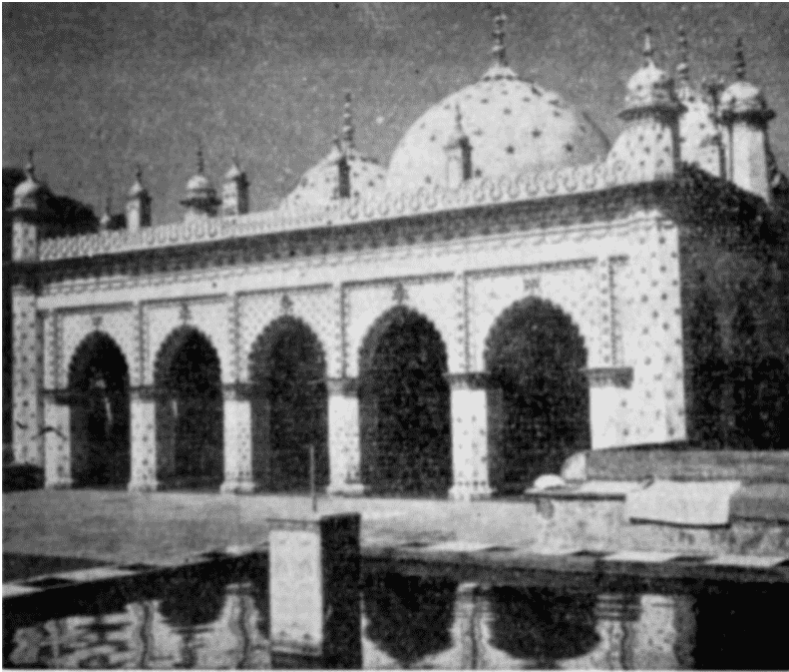
The Chowk

The Chowk or the old market place is a large square from where four main bazars take off in the four directions. It is surrounded by mosques and shops, the most famous being the Chowk mosque. Even today it remains as important a business centre as it was during the Mughal period.

Mosques

Dacca's 700 mosques would take months to visit but the following few important ones will repay examination:—

1. Kar Talab Khan's mosque at Begum Bazar Road, built by Nawab Murshid Kuli Khan, in 1709 A.D.
2. Lalbagh mosque, built by Prince Mohammad Azam.
3. The Chowk mosque, built by Nawab Shaista Khan in 1676 A.D.
4. Dilkusha Bagh mosque at Purana Paltan built during the Pathan period.
5. Satgumbad mosque at the river bank about 2 miles north of the city, built about 1680 A.D.
6. Star mosque, the most beautiful of them all, is situated on Armanitola road in the old city.



The Star Mosque

Hussaini Dalan

This sacred hall where ceremonial rites are observed every year during the month of Muharram (Islamic Era) in commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, is situated on Nazimuddin Road.

Temples

Besides its mosques, Dacca also has a good number of non-Islamic temples, the most famous amongst which are:—

1. Guru Teg Bahadur's Songat at Sankari Tolla.
2. Jai Kali's temple in Thathari Bazar.
3. Sikh temple at Shujaatpur.
4. Dhakeswari temple on Dhakeswari Road.

Dacca Museum

The Museum contains a large number of interesting collections including sculpture and paintings of the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim periods as well as inscriptions of the Holy Quran in Arabic and Persian letters and Bengali works in the Arabic script.

Balda Museum

The Balda Museum has a rich collection of old coins, metal images and ivory antiquities. The botanical gardens attached to the museum have a fairly representative collection of botanical plants including the ‘century flower’, which is said to bloom once every sixteen years.

Ramna Park

Ramna Park is a vast stretch of green ground, dotted with mango groves and surrounded by a serpentine lake. It is a popular spot for picnics and angling. The Park, along with the race course commonly called Ramna Green, provides a serenely calm atmosphere rarely found in a busy metropolis.

Dacca University

The Dacca University was established in 1921 as the first residential university of the sub-continent. As many as 56 colleges are affiliated to the University which is the principal seat of learning in East Pakistan. Lately, it has attracted a large number of scholars and research workers from many foreign countries. The main faculties at the University are: Literature, Science, Law, Medicine, Engineering, Commerce, Agronomy and Languages.

Curzon Hall

Now forming part of the science section of Dacca University, the Curzon Hall was originally built as a Durbar Hall and was named after Lord Curzon,

a former Governor-General of British India. The imposing structure of the building is a splendid blend of the Indo-British and Mughal styles of architecture.

Medical College and Hospital

The Medical College and its attached hospital are housed in a vast building whose style is distinguished by a strong horizontal dominance achieved with its flattened domes, flat-arched openings and a continuous projected eave supported on brackets throwing into relief the cornice. It is again a harmonious blend of the old and new architectural patterns. The hospital is fully equipped with modern appliances.

Institute of Fine Arts

Situated in the picturesque surroundings of Shah Bagh, the Government Institute of Fine Arts functions under the able guidance of the well-known artist, Zain-ul-Abedin. The Institution also has a representative collection of folk art and paintings by East Pakistani artists.

Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts

Named after the late Bulbul Chowdhry, whose widely travelling dancing troupe earned a world-wide reputation, the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA) serves as training ground for young, promising dancers, musicians and singers. Training is imparted in the classical as well as the folk tradition at the Academy. Troupes from the Academy tour every year in many foreign countries where their performances are highly appreciated.

Tejgaon Industrial Area

In this area, which is situated at a distance of about 4 miles from Dacca, a large number of modern factories and mills have been constructed. Near the Tejgaon railway station is the Catholic church dedicated to 'Our Lady of the Rosary', which is believed to be the oldest church in East Pakistan. It

was rebuilt in the latter part of the 16th century and contains memorial tablets some of which are more than 250 years old.

Fairs and Festivals

The week-long festivities of the 'East Pakistan Week' are held every year in January when the pleasant winter season is at its best. The programme of the week includes folk and tribal dances, music concerts, carnivals, art exhibitions, sports and athletics. For the interest of tourists and visitors, elephant trapping operations known as 'kheda' as well as big game hunting and river cruising are also organised during the week.

Cultural Activities

Dacca hums with cultural activities all through the year, particularly during the winter months. Cultural shows, dramas, concerts of music and dancing, exhibitions of paintings and handicraft, local fairs and festivals, all provide excellent occasions of entertainment and opportunities for the visitors to get acquainted with the cultural heritage and way of life of the colourful people of East Pakistan.

Handicrafts

The handicrafts and cottage industry products of East Pakistan have long enjoyed a world-wide reputation. Even Hiuan Tsang, the Chinese traveller who visited this part of the sub-continent in the 7th century A.D., has recorded his appreciation of the beauty and intricacy of these handicrafts which include handloom fabrics, printed sarees, wood and cane products, coconut masks, bamboo products, mother of pearl jewellery, folk dolls, horn products and sital pati.

Sports and Games

The new Dacca stadium is the nerve-centre of sports and athletic activities. Popular games played at the stadium include football, hockey,

cricket, volley-ball and basket ball. Playing facilities for interested tourists are provided by the various sports clubs located in the stadium.

The well-known channel swimmer, Brojen Das, hails from Dacca where he is held in affectionate esteem by his compatriots.

River Cruising

Excellent cruising facilities are available in the rivers that surround the city of Dacca. One has just to hire the craft of one's choice—yacht, sampan, canoe or launch—and set out to get a few hours' respite from the many demands of a busy city life. As one sails down the river, nature leisurely unfolds its charms and splendours—the serene beauty of the surroundings, the blissful atmosphere of the suburbs, and, above all, the soothing view of rippling, bubbling, over flowing water all around.

PLACES OF INTEREST AROUND DACCA

Narayanganj

Located 10 miles from Dacca on the bank of the perennially navigable river Sitalakhya, Narayanganj is a busy industrial town and the biggest inland river port of East Pakistan. It is connected with Dacca by a metre gauge railway and a fine metalled road which runs parallel to river Buriganga with scenic splendours all around. It is the world's largest centre for jute trade and manufacture. Hundreds of boats loaded with jute—the golden fibre of the East—call daily at the harbour. Cotton and jute spinning and weaving are the main vocations of the inhabitants. The cotton and jute mills are stretched for miles along both banks of the river, the Adamjee Jute Mills being the largest. At Baburhat nearby, popularly known as the Manchester of the East, is a large concentration of the handloom industry.



Narayanganj Ghat

Sonargaon

A few miles from Narayanganj, Sonargaon is an ancient town which was the seat of the first Pala Dynasty (7th-10th century A.D.). Amongst the ancient monuments still intact is the gate-way to the city which depicts exceptionally fine workmanship. Other monuments are the tomb of Ghiasuddin (1389-1409 A.D.), the shrines of Pajpir and Shah Abdul Alla and a beautiful mosque in Goaldi village.

Vikrampur

Situated 15 miles from Dacca and approachable by boat, motor launch or steamer service from Munshiganj, it is the oldest historically known capital city of Bengal (7th century A.D.)

Other monuments of interest in the suburbs of Dacca include the Sonakanda fort on the eastern bank of the river Sitalakhya and the Idrakpur fort at Munshiganj which was constructed during the Mughal period to check the raids of the Portuguese.

PICNIC SPOTS

There are excellent picnic spots in picturesque surroundings within a few miles of Dacca. The area around Savar and Mirzapur abounds in game birds such as partridge, quail, duck and snipe. A good shoot can be had here during the game season but a permit has to be obtained beforehand from the Forest Department. Other beauty spots connected by road with Dacca include Joydevpur, Sripur, Madhupur, Rajendrapur and Chandra, all of which have rest houses that can be used by tourists on request to the Forest Department.

MODE OF TRAVEL

By Air

(1) *Western Routes:*

New York-London-Geneva-Rome-Beirut-Teheran-Karachi-Dacca
(P.I.A.)

Bombay-Delhi-Calcutta-Dacca. (I.A.C. & P.I.A.)

(2) *Eastern Routes:*

Tokyo-Calcutta-Dacca (I.A.C.)

Hongkong-Bangkok-Calcutta-Dacca (I.A.C.)

Rangoon-Chittagong-Dacca (P.I.A.)

Airlines and Travel Agencies

P.I.A.C.

I.A.C.

B.O.A.C.

K.L.M.

S.A.S.

SWISSAIR

PAK BAY TRAVEL AGENCY

TRAVELOGUE

GLOBE TRAVELS

ORIENT TRAVELS

EASTERN AIR EXPRESS

Tourist Season and Dress

Climate in Dacca is very pleasant during winter (October-March) and this is the best time to visit Dacca and East Pakistan. Light woollen clothes serve in winter. For summer tropical clothing is required.

Language

English is widely spoken and understood. The principal local language is Bengali. Urdu is also widely spoken and written.

Photography

One Camera can be imported as Passenger's luggage. Black and white and colour films as well as processing facilities are available.

Angling Centres

- (a) Ramna Green Lake
- (b) Dhanmandi Lake
- (c) Buriganga River
- (d) Fish ponds

For detailed information please contact:

EAST PAKISTAN ANGLERS' CLUB
C/O TOURIST BUREAU, DACCA

Hunting and Shooting

The forest regions around Dacca are full of wild game such as tigers and leopards. Game birds including duck, partridge, quail and geese are also available in abundance near Dacca.

For detailed information please contact:

PAKISTAN SHIKAR AGENCY
C/O TOURIST BUREAU, DACCA.

European Style Hotels

	Single Room (<u>including meals</u>).	Double Room
1. Hotel Shahbagh (air-conditioned)	Rs. 45.00	Rs. 70.00
2. Hotel Shalamar	Rs. 28.00	Rs. 50.00
3. Hotel Green	Rs. 18.00	Rs. 34.00

Clubs

1. Rotary Club
2. Lions Club
3. Dacca Club Limited
4. East Pakistan Flying Club, Dacca Airport
5. East Pakistan Press Club

Cinemas

1. Gulistan, Jinnah Avenue
2. Naaz, Gulistan Building, Jinnah Avenue (air-conditioned)
3. Mukul, Johnson Road
4. Maya, Wiseghat
5. Nishat, Bangshal Road
6. Rup Mahal, Sadarghat

Restaurants And Bars

1. Hotel Shahbagh and Bar
2. Gulistan Restaurant and Bar
3. Mirander Restaurant and Bar
4. Airport Hotel and Bar
5. Hotel Green and Bar

Souvenirs

1. Pink pearls
2. Handloom and embroidery products
3. Cotton and silk sarees
4. Cane and bamboo products

Shopping Centres

1. The New Market
2. Jinnah Avenue
3. Nawabpur
4. Patuatully and Islampur
5. Chowk Bazar
6. Hotel Shahbagh Arcade
7. The Dacca Stadium
8. Moloo's, curio and carpet shop, 10, Jinnah Avenue
9. Falson's, handicrafts and curios, 5, Hotel Shahbagh Arcade

Overseas Communications

Direct telegram and telephone services with most foreign countries are available.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN TOURIST OFFICES

1. Tourist Bureau, Government of Pakistan, Club Road, Karachi.
Phone No. 50119
2. Tourist Bureau, Government of Pakistan, Airport, Karachi.
Phone No. 49241
3. Tourist Bureau, Government of Pakistan, West Wharf, Karachi.
Phone No. 34390
4. Government Tourist Bureau, Opp Faletti's Hotel, Egerton Road,
Lahore.
Phone No. 67962
5. Government Tourist Bureau, No. 1. Kitchner Road, Peshawar.
Phone No. 2428
6. Government Tourist Bureau, 14/2, Topkhana Road, Dacca.
Phone No. 6206
7. Government Tourist Bureau, The Mall, Murree.
Phone No. 189
(In winter this office is shifted to Rawalpindi)
8. Government Tourist Bureau, Yasmin Palace, Jubilee Road, Chittagong.
Phone No. 4848

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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