

# Home grown 'Foreign furniture'

At Panthapath rows of furniture shops have grown over the years. These shops claim to have foreign furniture for sale. But in fact, all furniture sold on these premises are locally made. The public are simply cheated

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The furniture shops of Panthapath that claim to sell "foreign furniture" are selling nothing but local furniture.

"Most of the furniture sold in this market is made locally. We have to convince customers that this is foreign furniture otherwise they would not buy them", said a vendor of the Panthapath furniture market.

The desire of the local people towards the possession of foreign items is growing immensely.

Furniture dealers have developed Panthapath as a "market" for furniture from ships. The demand for ship furniture is growing among city dwellers as the nature of the furniture has proven its longevity and comfort. In addition the unusual designs attract the customer.

"Most of the furniture comes from Chittagong which is the centre of breaking ships. Although ships are broken mainly for the purpose of its iron

and steel, businessmen have wormed their way into making a living with the furniture. Therefore, our business is solely dependent on the ship breaking industry," said a shop owner at Panthapath "foreign furniture" market.

As the furniture sold here originates from ships built in other countries, the market at Panthapath is named as "foreign furniture" market and reflected in the name of the shops like Super Foreign Furniture, DC Foreign Furniture, Deluxe Foreign Furniture and many other names emphasizing the word "foreign".

Customers demand cheap prices. This compels shop owners in unduly deceiving them.

"The price of the ship breaking furniture is very high, may probably be double the price of local furniture. Customers like to possess valuable items, but are not willing to pay the price fixed for each item. They bargain and bring the prices down," said a salesman of a shop.

It is easier for the shop owners to cheat the customers as "Eighty per cent of the customers cannot identify what teak is and are unable to differentiate ship's furniture with local ones", said a vendor.

The Panthapath furniture market is well known for ship breaking furniture but the flow of this furniture into the Panthapath market has reduced because of the development of other furniture similar markets in the city. Jatrabari, Uttara, Shahjahanpur, Kazipara, Sheorapar and Mirpur Stadium are some areas that could be named.

"We can't tell our customers that the flow of furniture is reducing as they come to this market with the expectation of buying foreign furniture," said a manager of a shop.

"There are above hundred furniture shops at Panthapath and all are selling local furniture in the name foreign furniture. I can't survive being an exception," said a shop owner.



These furniture shops in their signboards claim to sell foreign furniture only to cheat innocent customers.

## Adulterated fuel lives!



Adulterated fuel could cause environmental degradation.

AKBAR HOSSAIN

Despite various measures taken by the government to check adulteration in petrol pumps, it is believed the practice is still going on.

On July 1, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) decided to introduce blue kerosene in the market so that unscrupulous businessmen could not mix it up with petrol, diesel and octane.

But consumers are still skeptic about whether the government initiative is working or not.

"I don't know whether they are giving me original or adulterated petrol as the output from the dispensing unit is not visible," said a bus driver at a filling station in Mirpur.

Aminul Hoque, owner of a car echoed the same sentiment: "What is the benefit of giving different colours to kerosene, diesel or octane if it is not possible for me to recognize them?"

"Adulteration is going on in a subtle way and it is not possible for the general consumers to identify it," said

an official of Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) on condition of anonymity.

"On receiving complaints from the customers, we collected samples from various filling stations across the city and definite adulteration was detected," he revealed.

According to BSTI officials, shortage of manpower and vehicles, absence of a strict law etc. are the major problems they face in conducting effective inspection of petrol pumps.

"But a new law has been promulgated recently which gives BSTI the power to take stern action against corrupt petrol pump owners," informed another official who also did not want to be named.

Filling station owners deny any wrongdoing on their part and instead point elsewhere.

At a recent press conference, the secretary general of Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers Association said: We have to take ultimate responsibility regarding adulteration but it actually takes place in oil depots."

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Dhanmondi lake area opposite the Bangabandhu Museum on Road 32 has become the latest addition to the systematic extortion by policemen in the city.

The mobile shops at the Dhanmondi lakeside keep their businesses running by paying extortion money to the policemen.

"We have to pay Tk.300 to the police post at Dhanmondi lake every week to keep the business open," said a mobile shop owner as he was selling beef chop to a customer.

"My ustad is running another shop at Dhanmondi road 25 and he has had all the necessary connections with the police for a very long time. This has helped us to continue running our roadside businesses even though we pay extortion money to the policemen," added the vendor.

Besides paying the monthly sum to the police post in the area, the vendors also pay a daily toll of Tk.30 to another policeman. This policeman brings the toll-collecting pass from the Dhanmondi lake police post thus giving him the authority to collect such monies from all the shops doing business at the lakeside.

"There are about 10 *chatpali* and *fuchka* four wheeled shops and some cigarette shops here and all of them have to pay the extortion otherwise they won't be able to do business here," said a *chatpali* salesman.

The extortionist policeman has to distribute his illegal income among two parties. Tk.10 goes to the police van, Tk.10 to the other security policeman at the lakeside and the balance of Tk.10 goes to the pocket of the policeman who 'qualifies' for collection.

"The line of the shops at lakeside is subjected

to unofficial tender and whoever bids the highest gets the contract from the police outpost," said a vendor.

The lack of place for relaxation, to roam around and sit beside the lake, to seek refuge into the nature from the bustle of the city life makes the lakeside a popular pastime for the city dwellers.

Most of the shops at the lakeside on road 32 start their business after 12 noon and continue till midnight. "We can earn about Tk.800 per day from the 12 hour sale," said a chop seller at the lakeside.

To the vendor at the lakeside the business has become legal as he is paying money to the legal authority. "We are paying the police, so why should we be evicted from here?" asked a vendor.

Some policemen also own shops along the Dhanmondi lakeside area without the fear of extortion.

The large number of visitors has made the lakeside a lucrative business spot for small vendors, as well as a new venue for systematic extortion by policemen.



Snack shops doing brisk business at Road-32 thanks to policemen at the nearby outpost.

## utilitytaxicab&citybusroute

### UTILITY

#### Electricity

Electricity Complex- PDB- 9566061-5, 9560170-9  
Electricity Complex (DESA)- 8616737-43, 8617626  
DESCO- 8123138-40  
Complaints (Rural Electrification Board, Dhaka)- 8916424-8

#### Gas

Titas Gas Exchange (Emergency)- 9563667-8  
Kawrnbar-8112135-42  
Mirpur- 9000519  
Mohammadpur- 9117215,9113903  
Mohakhali- 9884741, 9885922, 8824993  
Motijheel-9667612

#### WASA

WASA (PABX)- 8117829-31  
Mirpur- 9000519  
Mohammadpur- 8120192  
Fakirapool-9115343  
Asad Gate- 8917492  
Uttara- 9559142,  
Segunbagicha- 7316348  
Pagla- 8113900-39

#### Fire Services

Siddique Bazar (HQ)- 9556667  
Mohammadpur- 9112078  
Khilgaon- 7218329  
Mirpur- 9001055  
Tongi- 9801070  
Demra-7400111  
Postagola- 7410771  
Sadarghat- 7119759  
Mirpur 10 Circle- 9002269, 9001055  
Mirpur TVG Complex- 9001189

### DO YOU KNOW

Fire services provide cheap, fast and efficient ambulance service too?



### TAXI CAB

#### Yellow Cab

Navana 9558065  
Salida 9344477, 0171620881  
Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191  
Cab One 7113282-3  
Nihon 8624741-2  
Orion 9347277  
Anudip 8125285 and 8127611  
Capital 9352847

#### TRAIN TIMING

##### Subarna Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm

##### Mahanagar Prabhati

Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am

##### Mahanagar Godhuli

Leaves Dhaka at 3-05 pm

##### Turna

Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm

##### Parabat Express

Leaves Dhaka at 6-30 am

##### Joyantika Express

Leaves Dhaka at 12-30 pm

##### Upaban Express

Leaves Dhaka at 9-30 pm

##### Tista Express

Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am

##### Ekata Express

Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm

##### Upakul Express

Leaves Dhaka at 6-00 am

##### Padma Express

Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

Union 8130485

Kool 0171826731

#### Black Cab

Cab Ex 9358401

Cabline 8321162

JBS Cab 019364575

Sajan 018126036

Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611

Cab One 7113282-3

Palki 0171052500

Cab I 7113282

Jatri 0171540074

Nipun 9572277

R-Cab 8914782

Star Cab 9571919

Shihab 018202477 & 018228675

KGn 8620011

### CITY BUS ROUTE

#### Bus No. Route

1 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12  
2 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2  
3 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur  
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi  
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur  
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulistan 1, 2  
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2  
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattar- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2  
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2  
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi  
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12  
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biwa Road-Tongi Bridge  
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge  
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge  
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur  
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur  
14 Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12  
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12  
24 Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile

#### Starts from

Golap Shah Mazar  
Phoolbaria bus station  
Phoolbaria bus station  
Shyampur  
Sayedabad  
Kamalapur  
Kamalapur  
Motijheel Shaplachattar  
Sadarghat  
Chittagong Road  
Demra Ranimahall  
Sadarghat  
Sayedabad  
Syedabad  
Shanir Akhra  
Motijheel  
Signboard (Chittagong Road)  
Chittagong Road  
Gulistan