

The Death of Dhaka's Posh Spots

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EVERY city has its posh residential areas. Away from the bustling city, quiet and serene, these are where the well-off dwell, and where others drive by, dreaming of buying a house there someday. Once upon a time, Dhaka too could boast of elegant, quiet residential areas where cosy or majestic houses with fragrant flower gardens lined the tranquil lanes adorned with billowing trees.

That certainly is a far cry from residential neighbourhoods of today's Dhaka. Its so-called "posh", "residential" areas have and continue to become anything but that. Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara -- places where half the city travels to every morning, to work in banks and restaurants, shops and garment factories.

Quaint independent houses have been turned to high rise apartment buildings, sacrificing the beautiful gardens. Lanes are now thoroughfares where cars honk rudely and create traffic jams. Roads are pot-holed, muddy and smell of rotting garbage left in heaps in corners. Avenues of elegance have been turned into lines of commercial establishments from banks to schools to clinics. So what happened to the best neighbourhoods of Dhaka?