

Nightlife of Old Dhaka

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In the dead of night when most people are sleeping after the hustle and bustle of a hectic day, a certain part of the city wakes up with loud music blaring out from food outlets tearing the stillness of night. The eateries in the lanes of old Dhaka are seen busy catering to a section of people who like to take a bite of nun, parata and

"There is an influx of customers from 1 to 5 in the morning. There are several restaurants in this area which remain open whole night," he said. "We have two shifts - from 6:00am to 6:00pm and from 6:00pm to 6:00am. I like working at night because of the boisterous mood night wears"



These sorts of tandoori restaurants attract visitors throughout the night.

tandoori with kebab or taste some morsel of scrumptious biriyani in the middle of the night. "Workers, mainly from shoe factories in the locality come to our restaurant at late night. People come with their friends and families," said Kamal, a cook of Habiba Restaurant on Kazi Alauddin Road, which remains open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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morning and in the evening. "The best time for the customers is night. Factory workers start coming after midnight and continue till 4:00am," said Delwar Hossain, a cook working at Hanif Biriyani for the last 20 years. Ten years ago a full plate biriyani cost Tk 15, which now costs Tk 90, said the eatery owners, adding that the price hike of ingredients has forced them to raise the price of biriyani, a very popular item for Old Dhaka connoisseurs. "Price of beef is Tk 180 per kg now, which was Tk 60 a few years back; one kg pulses now costs Tk 75 which was Tk 20 before. We are struggling to make profit in spite of raising prices," said Bacchu Mia who runs a restaurant on Aga Sadeq Road. "During the British rule Kazi Alauddin Road and Nawabpur Road were the busiest roads of



Kazi Alauddin Road of Old Dhaka, gets even busier during night hours.

Dhaka. Because of the Fulbaria Rail Station nearby, these roads had been busy round the clock. Rail passengers and people from all walks of life used to keep the

place in a boisterous mood," said Ahsan Ali, an elderly resident of Kazi Alauddin Road. "There were horse-drawn carts and bull carts on the road. Municipality also used boil carts

to transport garbage. There were always a flurry of activity," Ali said. "There were many old houses on this road but most of those were demolished to make

shops," he added. "Previously the place was less crowded. Now when I stand on this road I see it teeming with people, vehicle, rows of shops and lots of pandemonium," said Ali.

Dog-owners' doldrums

CITY CORRESPONDENT

With so many people languishing in poverty and neglect, it may seem somewhat irrelevant to fret about dogs, but for most dog-owners, their pets are as important as any of their human friends and their plight is equally worrisome.

"I bought my Jenny when she was a puppy; I had just miscarried, and she came to take the place of my daughter," said Nina Parveen, a resident of Dhanmondi Road-27.

When a month-old Jenny became severely ill, her owners combed the city in search of a veterinary doctor to treat her, and finally came across Dr. Bhoumik, a vet who sits near the Sony Cinema Hall in Mirpur.

"The treatment was very expensive, and since then, every year we have to give her two injections worth Tk.1500. Now, she is sick again, and I have to take her all the way to Mirpur because there are no vets in the Dhanmondi area. This week alone I have spent Tk.1200 for

her medicines," Nina Parveen said.

Another proud pet-owner, preferring not to be named, added that though the medicines are exorbitantly priced, there is no guarantee of their reliability. "We have to take whatever the vet-prescribes, because there are so few options, and then we have no way of knowing whether these vaccines have been properly refrigerated, or diluted with other substances," he complained.

Specialists at the Central Veterinary Hospital of Dhaka explained that most of the canine vaccines and medicines were highly priced because they were imported.

Situated on Kazi Alauddin Road in the old part of the city, the hospital is the largest of its kind in the country, and receives about fifteen domestic dogs in need of medical attention each day.

According to vets at the hospital, the most frequently prescribed and essential canine

vaccine is for rabies. Although the Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute does produce rabies vaccine that costs only

Tk.25 per vial, most dog-owners feel they cannot rely on the local medicine. They tend to go for the rabies vaccine that is

imported from France, each injection of which costs Tk.550.

Another common canine vaccine is Hexadog, which costs

between Tk.600-700 in the market. Dogs that are prone to worm infestation require injections every 3-4 months, which cost

Tk.800 each.

While the Central Veterinary Hospital is adequately equipped to provide such treatments, as well as to perform canine surgeries, they have no facility for keeping the dogs in the hospital overnight if the need arises.

Several dog-owners confided that besides the difficulty of obtaining proper medical care for their furry friends, opportunities for their recreation were also limited. Dogs taken for walks on the street were subject to taunts, kicks and even pebbles pelted at them by cruel kids. As a result, some ended up confining their dogs to the home for the most part, which is sheer torture for dogs that live in small apartments.

In the few apartment buildings where people are permitted to keep dogs, they face constant stigma, since according to popular superstition, angels will not come into houses with dogs.

Embracing her dog Jenny, Nina Parveen said, "I have to constantly battle with other apartment owners to keep my

child, Jenny, and for her sake, I turn a deaf ear to all their insults. I will continue to do so, and to do everything I can to obtain the best care for her, but it is such a constant struggle, so time-consuming and expensive, that I don't know how long I can keep it up."

Rejoinder

In a rejoinder, the Air Quality Monitoring Project (AQMP) director Dr. Mohammad Nasiruddin contested a Star City report under the caption "Unfit diesel-run vehicles do the damage" published on July 29, 2007 and said that he was misquoted as saying "The government should ban the import of reconditioned vehicles from India".

He said what he said was, "Government may consider imposing restriction on the import of 4 years old reconditioned medium and heavy duty vehicles including old engines used for commercial purposes. This particular policy option alone will pave the way for reducing vehicular emission in the city to a great extent".

Note: We regret the error.



health, bus services, airlines & train timing

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Square Hospitals Ltd
Emergency: 8144466, 8144477, 8144488, 0171337773, 0171447774, 0171337775. Fax: 880-2-9118921

Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital
9008919, 8051618

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka
9891680-4, 01713046684/85
Emergency no. 9896623, 0171409000

Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital
9118202, 8115843

Central Hospital
9660015-19,

China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd
8913674

Dhaka Medical College Hospital
8626812-16

Gana Shasthyo Kendra
8617208, 8617383, 8620178, Greenland Hospital 8912663

Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic
8822738, 8812992

Holy Family Hospital
8311721-25

Islam Bank Hospital
9337739

Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital
8828855, 8827575

Labaid Cardiac Hospital
8610793-8

Mari Stopes Clinic
8821874

Medinova Medical Services Ltd
8620353,

Rashmoni General Hospital
8317606, 9557354, 8317819

Ratan's Dental Clinic
9111090

Salimullah Medical College Hospital
7319002-6

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9122560-78

Shishu Hospital
8116061-2, 9119119

United Hospital
8836444, 0194001234

BLOOD BANK

Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank
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Modern Clinic & Blood Center
9883948

Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College
9668690

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8014563

Eagle Paribahan
7101504

Green Line Paribahan
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9120116

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7101894, 7101250, 9121280

Modern Enterprise
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7101945, 7101951, 9123092

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8014397, 9001796

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7102461

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9333803

AIRLINES

lines

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Biman Bangladesh Airlines
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Airport Office: 8917400, Fax: 8913005

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Malaysia Airlines
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Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478

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Singapore Airlines
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Airport Office: 8911928, Fax: 8811503

Thai Airways
8314711-18, 8914343

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8816324-5, Fax: 9896481

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LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4, **Shishu Academy**- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
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Information Resource Center, The American Center- 8813440-4, 9886395-9
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
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