

Symphony Records still has a wide collection of old music cassettes.



The sari shops have always been instrumental in attracting shopper to New Market since its construction in 1954.

Most people would visit the crowded, noisy, narrow streets of Old Dhaka to get their shopping done. The emergence of a cleaner, more spacious market proved to be a pleasant change for the people of the city.

"New Market originally had an elitist feel to it, as only a number of shops were allowed to start their business within the complex. This, however, didn't last for long. More and more stores began to open shop as customers were demanding for more choices and variety," says Shamim Ali, long time manager of Fancy Store.

'The market has improved with time as more facilities were added to enhance people's shopping experience. The garden in the centre of the market gave way to a mosque, and separate washrooms for men and women were added. Wooden fixtures in stores were gradually replaced by fittings and fixtures that would suit the new eras. The market has become a shrine of sorts for shoppers from all over the country and from all walks of life. A visit to Dhaka is no longer complete without a quick stopover at New Market.

Once Upon a Tea Time

"I miss the New Market of my childhood days," says 63 year-old Mala Ahmed, "My sisters and I would sneak out of college to shop at the various sari shops in the market. The shop keepers were extremely cordial, greeting us with cold drinks, paying close attention to our wants, quite unlike the unprofessional treatment meted out by stores nowadays."

Mala fondly remembers the cream rolls of the only bakery situated in New Market at that time. The rolls were a novelty of sorts in the country then and only a few bakeries would make these delicious treats.

"I would often throw a fit if my father didn't get cream rolls for me from New Market's Olympia Bakery. My sisters branded me as the spoilt one but I wouldn't care and my father had to give in," laughs Mala.

Olympia Bakery has been in business since 1951 and was one of the first stores to open shop in New Market. The only bakery in the market, Olympia soon became a sought after place for exhausted customers looking for a quick bite to eat. Starting with their celebrated Ovaltine biscuits to their loved pastries, Olympia offered refined baked treats to satisfy the sweet tooth of people of all ages.

Mohammad Jahirul Islam, salesperson of the New Market branch, speaks about the bakery with a sense of pride and ownership. "Customers visiting our bakery have been coming here since the very beginning of its initiation. They are a dedicated bunch who passed on their love for our baked goods to their children and even their grandchildren," he says.

The cookies, *chanachur* and other such treats would be kept in transparent jars, allowing customers to pick out a biscuit and munch on it while sipping on their evening tea, says Islam. However, these products are now available in packets and boxes to meet hygiene and sanitation demands.

Despite being diagnosed with diabetes, Mala Ahmed can't resist the urge to occasionally request her son to get her cream rolls from Olympia whenever he visits New Market.

"The taste of these rolls reminds me of the father who would travel miles just to indulge the spoilt demands of his daughter," she says with a smile.