

The chief attraction of New Market is not its wide array of stores but its rich and extensive history.

out of business any time soon. Take a closer look and you'll see a long line of customers waiting their turn outside the shop.

This is New Life, a pharmacy which has been specialising in homeopathic medicine since the 1950s. Despite the strong smell of medicine wafting within the store, regulars linger around waiting to consult the in-house practitioner or offering wisdom to the newer customers.

Motaher Ali, founder of the New Life group, worked for the Indian Air Force in undivided India before joining the Ministry of Law. His interest in alternative medicine led to a full-time professional commitment to develop homoeopathy, unani and ayurved science services in Bangladesh.

His son, Dr SM Enamul Hoque, who has set up his homeopathy practice in the New Market branch of the pharmacy, says that his father's spiritual leanings attracted him to the study of alternative medicine. This encouraged generations of the family to pursue this profession. Hoque's daughter is also studying medicine in hopes of following her grandfather's footsteps.

"My father established the first homeopathic medicine manufacturing company, New Life and Co. Ltd, in Bangladesh in 1961. Most of the medicines you find here are manufactured by our company; we only import medicines that are difficult to manufacture in the country," he says.

A customer at the pharmacy cuts in at this juncture of our conversation, stating that her whole family, beginning with her parents to her in-laws and even her adult nephews and nieces are loyal, satisfied customers of the pharmacy. Unlike other alternative medicine organisations, New Life never compromised with their standards to maximize profits and so, has been able to hold on to its booming client base, she says.

What Suits the Father Suits the Son

Legacy can only be carried forward when your dream is adopted by your family members. Instead of falling to ruins after the death of its founder, the celebrated Bashiruddin Tailors, established in the 1950s in New Market, expanded in size, stature and variety over the years under the dedicated, watchful eye of his son Md Harun.

The tailoring shop has a loyal client base, extending to generations of the same family who prefer the historic shop for their detailed work and distinctive designs. People from all walks of life, starting from ministers to office goers, have been coming to Bashiruddin Tailors for ethnic outfits that will make them stand out in a crowd.

"Even Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman used to get his clothes made by my father. We are known for our 'Mujib' coats that are in demand by politicians and regular shoppers alike," says Harun.

Just as we are concluding our chat session with Harun, an elderly man walks in with a young man who seemed to be in his mid-20s. The man speak in an affectionate tone with Harun, calling him by his first name, and requesting him to see what could be done for his son, who, he says, would soon be getting married.

Harun politely excuses himself from the conversation we are having, adding with an embarrassed smile, "Customers, first."