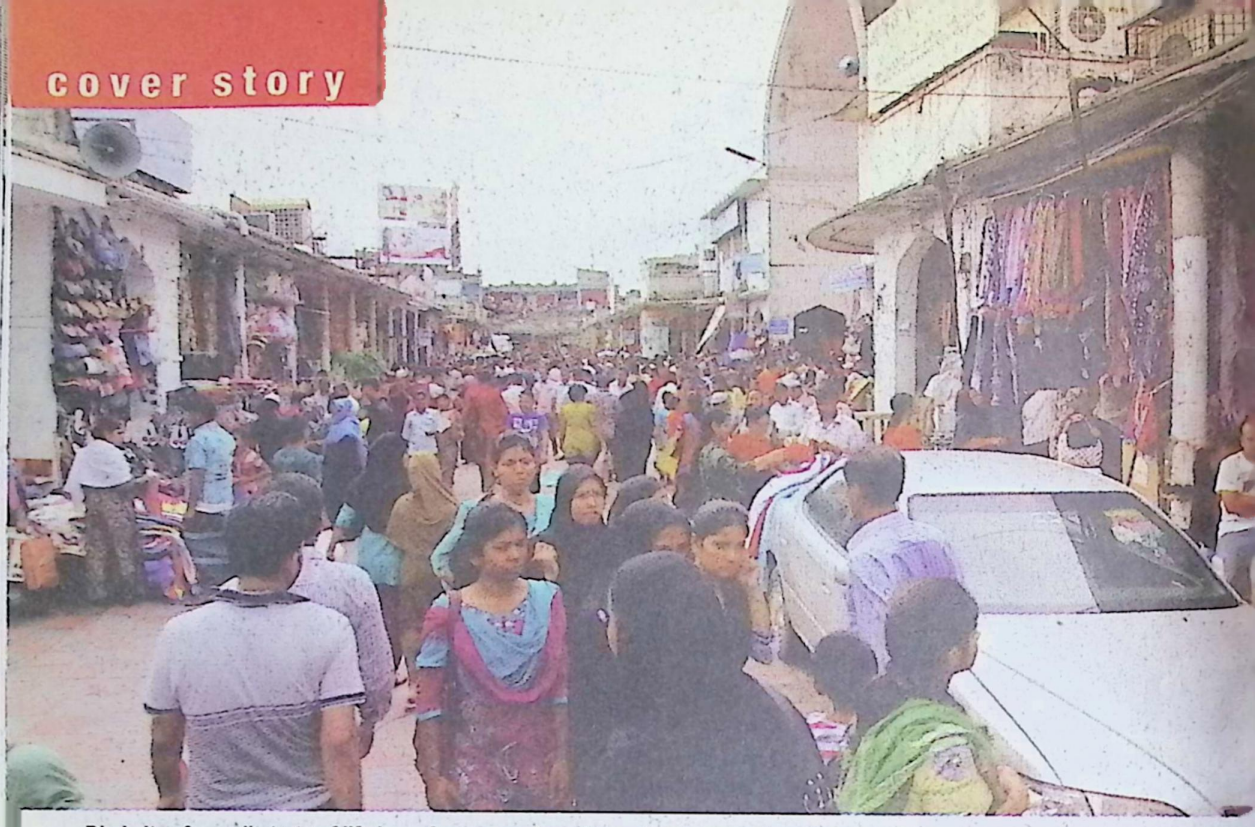


Dhakaites from all strata of life have forever preferred New Market over the glitzier malls and boutiques.

The Lone 'Saloon'

Amidst the hustle and bustle, and the numerous impressive stores of New Market, it'd be easy to miss a small shop positioned in one corner of the busy marketplace. But make no mistake; this seemingly insignificant shop holds considerable weight for market regulars and staunch loyalists. The sole barber shop of New Market has always been and is still, quite in demand amongst loyal patrons, shop owners, employees and even hired help of the market.

Bangladesh Hairdresser Saloon had humble beginnings. A small room with a couple of chairs and just the barber owner; this scene gave way to a bigger space in the beginning of the 21st century with six more chairs added to accommodate more customers. The shop, currently under the supervision of Arifur Rahman, son of the late founder of the shop, employs four full-time staff. Originally serving as a stopover for a simple haircut, a clean shave or a quick trim of the moustache, the shop now offers a wide array of services for men, including facials, hair styling and even manicures and pedicures.

This ability to adapt with changing times is the reason why the barber shop is still popular amongst customers, says Abdul Sattar, an employee working for the shop since the last 24 years.

"Barber shops usually act as conversation spots for people. You meet new faces here, make friends here, get to speak your heart out with the assistants who listen quietly, nodding and shaking their heads at the right time. Our shop has become an 'adda' of sorts for regulars," says Sattar.

The shop might have changed to adjust to shifting trends but it has still held on to a part that reminds patrons of its historic bearings. A couple of dilapidated leather chairs, dating back to 50 years, are the only remnants of the store's humble origin.

From LPs to Cassettes to CDs

Nowadays you will find CD stores in the nooks and crannies of every neighbourhood of the city. However, Symphony Records still remains a favourite for music lovers everywhere, as you can be sure that if you don't find a record anywhere else in the city, you are sure to find it here.

"I travel all the way from Mohakhali to New Market to visit Symphony to buy music CDs, as I know that they will have the record I'm looking for. They make sure that they don't let me go empty handed even when they don't have the album that I'm looking for in their stock at the moment," says school teacher, Asif Sikder.

Opened around 25 years ago, Symphony Records ensures that their loyal customers don't ever leave their store dissatisfied.

"If our client is looking for a music CD that we don't have at that moment, we note down the name of the album and try to get it for them within the week," says Nokul Chandra Burman, Manager of Symphony's New Market branch.