

Budget Eating around Campus

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CAMPUS: North South University, Bashundhara

BUDGET: 100 ± 50 Taka

University life is not easy. You have a thin wallet and somehow you always manage to be hungry. While international fast food or coffee shop chains might be fun to visit once in a while, you need a place to frequent with your friends who often whine loudly, "Taka nai, dost!" NSU does have four dedicated canteens serving a wide variety of food but it's only natural that you would lose interest in them over time. But have no fear, as there are some great places just near the campus to take care of your growling tummy.

HAJI BIRYANI

Does this require any introduction? One of the three verified branches of the original Haji Biryani franchise, this place entices everyone who passes by with tantalizing aroma. Freshly cooked biryani is transported directly from Old Dhaka and sold for Tk 130 per plates – either ceramic or in packets made entirely out of leaves. The amount you get is more than enough to keep you satiated till dinner.

AL ARABIAN

Hungry for some sweet dish? Al Arabian can bring a refreshing change to your sugary cravings. Along with the usual cakes, doughnuts and pastries of different types, this place offers the best baklava in town! At only Tk 25 per piece, these baklavas come in either the regular flavour or the chocolate version. The snacks are within the range of Tk 100. Grab a sandwich and a chilled Slice to go with it and you will have a content belly.

CHITTAGONG EXPRESS AND MEZBAN BARI

Authentic Chittagong food is now available for NSUers just a short rickshaw ride away. Both

these places are situated near the Apollo Hospital. Chittagong Express is ideal for hangouts with a large group of friends who are as hungry as a pack of wolves. Seemingly unlimited rice for Tk 30 and a bowl of Mezban Gosht worth 140, which can be shared by two people, can ensure an filling lunch within 100 bucks. I recently went there with four friends and our bill came up to be Tk 620; we shared Mezban Gosht and Daal Gosht, along with an enormous pile of rice. Also, they provide generous refills of gravy (don't be surprised if the waiter slips in pieces of meat along with it) and adequate salads. Mezban Bari is no different, although you can expect a little less food compared to Chittagong Express for the same price. However, the open air and comparatively nicer ambiance of Mezban Bari is worth mentioning.

BAILY PITHA GHOR

Pithas have always been a traditional delicacy. As the urban food scene is dominated by cakes and pastries, Baily Pitha Ghor remains a strong force in representing the now-rare treats. Grab a Patishapta for Tk 30 or be wowed by their succulent Malai Pitha for Tk 40.

BURGER LAB

The new burger joint in Bashundhara brings to you their "Old School" burger for Tk 130 and their "Say Cheese" one for Tk 150.

Whichever you choose, you will love the taste that remains in your mouth for quite a while.

LOCATIONS

Haji Biryani is located near the Bashundhara Gate. Al Arabian is just some distance away from Haji Biryani, towards the GrameenPhone headquarters and Baily Pitha Ghor is basically just beside it. The Burger Lab is also close by, at the underground place where Pizza Guy used to be located. Both Chittagong Express and Mezban Bari are placed along the lane that is beside Apollo Hospital.



TV SERIES REVIEW

SILICON VALLEY

An honest tech sitcom. Really.

ARMAN R. KHAN

Rating: 8.5/10

Allow me to introduce Silicon Valley, HBO's sitcom revolving around the lives of a few tech geeks living together. Wait, haven't we already seen the like in The Big Bang Theory? Yes and no.

The main story of Silicon Valley is about five young men and their tech start-up company in California's Silicon Valley. Richard Hendricks (Thomas Middleditch) and a few of his co-workers reside in Erlich Bachman's (T. J. Miller) house – termed "tech incubator" by himself – and design a music app with superb data compression called "Pied Piper." When their boss Gavin Belson (Matt Ross), CEO of Hooli, learns about it, he proposes to buy Pied Piper. But Richard has a panic attack and decides to keep the company and build it, with the help of Hooli's rival Peter Gregory (Christopher Evan Welch) who invests in Pied Piper whilst keeping a 5% ownership of the technology.

That's when the plot starts to pick up. Richard, the coy programmer with a history of panic attacks, Erlich, a Steve Jobs wannabe, and the bickering duo of Bertram Gilfoyle (Martin Starr) and Dinesh Chugtai (Kumail Nanjiani), are soon joined by Jared Dunn (Zach Woods), who leaves his prestigious marketing post at Hooli, and together they form the non-formidable team of Pied Piper, completely clueless and incompetent overall. But soon they learn that Hooli reversed Pied Piper's data compression algorithms and was trying to steal the idea, and the team steps up its game.

The series' comedy quotient takes off from the third episode, honestly. But it kept soaring, mingled with real facts regarding the world of technology and some punch lines. The show might seem a little sexist and even stereotypical to geeks, but after binge watching the entire first season overnight, I've concluded that these were intentionally put in for comedy purposes. In fact the only female lead is Amanda Crew playing Monica, Gregory's assistant.

The acting and portrayal of the respective roles came naturally, it would appear. Especially T. J. Miller's performance as a good-for-nothing opportunist with a flair for the dramatic dreaming to be the next Steve Jobs is equally praiseworthy and humorous. Though his character isn't killed off, we don't get to see Christopher Evan Welch after the fifth episode, since he actually died of lung cancer after shooting the first five episodes, and wasn't replaced.

Back to the comparison of Silicon Valley with The Big Bang Theory. While the comedy about a group of geek friends working together is something we've seen in TBBT, Silicon Valley goes a little easy on the technical terms, yet still being solely about the tech world. The two shows have different story-lines and the situational comedies are much different among the two, and better if not compared. A bonus point for not using laughter tracks. Moreover, SV is for a slightly mature audience due to language and some inappropriate scenes.

Silicon Valley, created by Mike Judge, John Altschuler and Dave Krinsky, is a sitcom that comedy lovers and tech-savvy people would both like. It contains themes of friendship gone sour, the tug-of-war between the richest of the richest companies, and pursuing one's dreams rather than being a sell-out – all presented in a balanced, humorous way. The first season comprises of eight episodes, 30 minutes each. So if you have some four hours to spare, and if you like sitcoms, have a go at Silicon Valley.