

# Try old town bakeries this

## Shab-e-Barat

The night of record on Shab-e-Barat is a major day to devote to Muslim all over the world; a day of austere worship and repentance and a night of forgiveness and rewards. Muslims fast and pray all through the night to gain the Almighty's forgiveness and start anew with a zeal of virtue. But another part of this day, especially in Bangladesh, is the sincerity and affection that is circulated among neighbours and relatives. Sweetmeat and bread (roti) is distributed door to door and houses come alive with a celebration of the divine.

Puran Dhaka with its heritage of traditions has long had its unique way of observing Shab-e-Barat. Candles are lit on the balconies of houses while children delight in the sparks of 'tarabati'. Sometimes, if one is lucky, one can catch the flare of fireworks. Going to pray becomes a community activity, as groups of friends, relatives head



towards the mosque to seek peace. In short the old town assumes a look of peaceful celebration.

A common tradition is the sending of food to the sons' and daughters' in laws houses, says Nafis, a university student living in Puran Dhaka. He goes on to explain how the streets are busy with people heading to the mosques and the occasional group of friends out all night with the excuse of praying. But, he adds, Shab-e-Barat would not be complete without the halwa.

The roti and halwa has been part and parcel of this celebration for ages, so much so that sometimes the eating and distributing of these is almost synonymous with the day itself. And while nothing can beat the food mothers and sisters prepare at home, the old bakeries and confectioneries of Puran Dhaka have always done their part to join in.

The most elaborate of the preparations has to be from the iconic Ananda Bakery on Satrouja Road at Bongshal. Most of the floor is cleared out and a fiesta of rotis and halwa is presented. People from all over

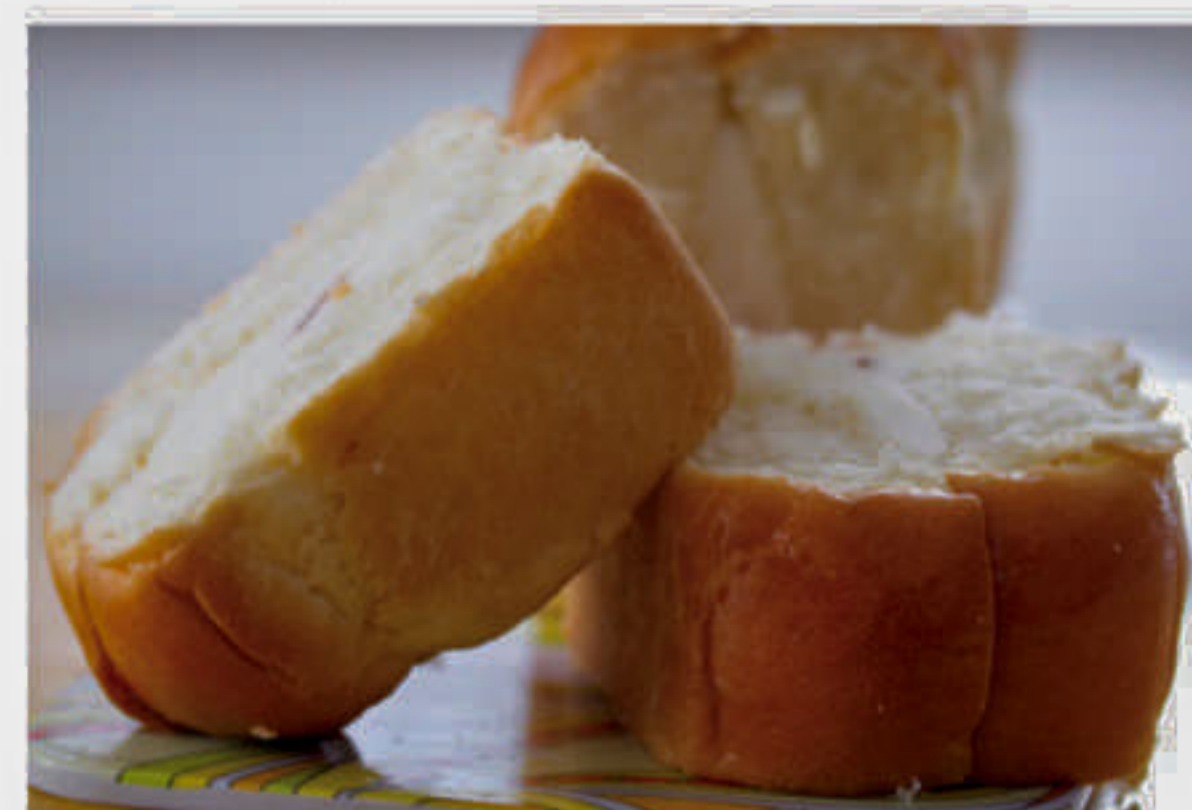
Puran Dhaka with its heritage of traditions has long had its unique way of observing Shab-e-Barat. Candles are lit on the balconies of

the city visit to taste the egg, shuji, boot or nesesta halwas. If you are looking for tradition and good food at a decent price, head over on the night of Shab-e-Barat.

Another big name among the traditional shops of Puran Dhaka is Olympia. Now with branches all over the city, the original Olympia in the old town is still a place to be to get the authentic ambience of the celebration and of course the food. The menu is still the same, consisting of roti and egg, carrot or shuji halwas. Located at Rankin Street, Wari, Olympia is hard to miss. And if you do get lost, ask any one there – they will be happy to guide you.

Yousuf Bakery is yet another name which people have always looked towards for their celebrations of Shab-e-Barat. Sadly, this year, they are sticking to selling only roti without any halwa. Besides the heavy weights, Chawk Bazar has its own little celebration of the night. Small shops will all stock up on different types of halwas and rotis – for a more diverse range of taste and environment, head over with a couple of good friends for a good time.

Nowadays though, most sweet meat



shops have their own little preparations for Shab-e-Barat – from Bonoful to supermarkets like Agora will all be stocking up on halwas. If you want to just take some food back home at the end of the day, these will do. But for the community affair, the Puran Dhaka way of celebration there's no alternative. These confectionaries and bakeries will start selling the halwas and the rotis on the day with some even going on till the next. Be it for the ambience, the food or just for a new experience, we definitely recommend heading over to Puran Dhaka.

**By Moyukh Mahtab**

**Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed**



#ChooseBeautiful

## Not just a pretty face

If you are seeking true beauty, it would really not be very difficult to find. Beauty is everywhere around us. All we need to do is wake up to this fact, open our eyes, and learn how to appreciate.

We asked Gazi Ahmed Shubhro, the Managing Director of Red Dot Multimedia Limited (a communications company) and the director of many advertisements, music videos, etc., including the famous campaign, Beautiful Bangladesh, about what beauty really is. He pointed out to the front page photograph of a newspaper, showing a cheerful and victorious Bangladesh cricket team. "This is beauty to me," he said with a smile.



**Gazi Ahmed Shubhro**

Shubhro believes that beauty is everywhere. "Nature has created all of us and the things around us in the most magnificent way. We just need to change our attitude and try to look at things more positively. Beauty is indeed all around us."

Shubhro does not believe in adhering to any preset notions of beauty. "Everybody is beautiful in his/her own way. We tend to compare between people, instead of accepting the way a person is," he said.

And indeed, we see that a lot of women, all over the world, strive to meet the expectations of others and suffer from lack of self-esteem. Shrugging off the prejudices and bigotries will help foster that confidence. There is no reason to try to adhere by the expectations and make everyone happy.

Beauty comes from within. Being a director, Shubhro feels that many young boys and girls want to conform to the standard that society has set for them.

"Of course, being presentable is extremely important. Try to present yourself in the best possible way. But it is necessary to find out what your individuality is and then work on improving that, instead of simply abiding by society's standards.

"I urge those people who aspire to work in the media to groom themselves up and hone their skills... Your successes, skills and experiences will radiate your inner beauty."

Being beautiful is all about being confident.

Shakespeare once said, "Nothing is good or bad. Only thinking makes it so." And we can extend this statement and say that nobody is beautiful or average. Only our thinking makes them so.

Beauty, therefore, is all about perception. We need to change the way we see others, and even more importantly, we need to change the way we see ourselves.

Be comfortable in your own skin. The rest will follow.

**By MH Haider**

**Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed**

So, how do you choose to define yourself?

