

EID SHOPPING



SHOPPING DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

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PHOTOS: MIZAN RAHMAN

gets difficult to breathe! Fabrics of all kind, colours and quality, starting from ladies wear to suits for the gents – Gausia has it all.

Whenever it comes to men's shopping, Polwel Super Market is one of the first places that come to mind. This place has been famous for affordable t-shirts and pants for years. Located in Naya Paltan, Polwel has been catering to a huge crowd of shoppers during Eid. Not only does it have vast options in clothing, the place is also best to shop for the children. If children want the new comic book tee shirts for Eid – this is the place to go to!

Though Mouchak Market has come into the lights of

controversy, this shopping ground still remains packed. This poorly maintained Super Market is a favourite in terms of ornaments. Surrounding the market are little path stores where one can buy belts, watches, pants, shirts and even sarees. The supermarket also hosts one of the first arcade restaurants in Dhaka-Meridian.

When talking about the old school shopping malls, one cannot forget the famous Eastern Plaza. Once considered as the mini Dubai of Dhaka, Eastern Plaza still is a crowd favourite. Though over the years it has been transformed into a popular hub for mobile servicing, this was once the place where families would visit once during the festivals. A major element of this mall was its CD shops. From games and softwares to music and movies, Eastern Plaza used to offer it all. The first escalator in Dhaka was installed in Eastern Plaza. All in all, Eastern Plaza was yet another tourist spot for people from outside the city.

There are many more options today, when it comes to comfortable shopping with a variety of choices. However, Eid or any other major festival in Dhaka is unimaginable without the names mentioned above, which will remain as important segments from our childhood days! ■



PHOTO: AKIB ABDULLAH

HERITAGE

Close your eyes and try to imagine the age when computers had not been invented or introduced. Think about how the large books or the lengthy newspapers were composed by hand, printed and made readable for the readers-- how long a time it would take, or how these would actually work. If you are pondering upon such questions, look no further for the answers.

Academician and Journalist Zulfiqar Haider mentions in his book "Bangladesher Songbadpotro O Sangbadikota" that in 1778; the first Bengali Printing press was established. In that press, Charles Wilkins, the inventor of the shape of modern Bengali typeface, created the Bengali fonts for the first time by designing the alphabets, cutting them and casting the types. Throughout the whole process, Wilkins was assisted by Panchanan Karmakar, an Indian inventor and Manohar Karmakar (Panchanan's Sister-in-law).

The news publications of the 19th century were printed in hand-driven press machines. The device for composing newspapers was called 'hand compositor' and the man who used to compose, would be called the 'compositor'.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF PRINTING

NILIMA JAHAN

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

One can find one of these old hand compositors at the old press 'Saogat', also known as 'Saugat' (meaning presentation), established by Mohammad Nasiruddin, the legendary Bangladeshi Journalist. Saogat was first established in Calcutta in 1918. But during the partition of Bengal, Mohammad Nasiruddin migrated to Dhaka and exchanged his press and house with the owner of the press 'Bijoya' in Loyal Street, Patuatuli, Dhaka. Later, 'Bijoya Press' was renamed 'Saogat' (Source: "Bangladesher Songbadpotro O Sangbadikota" by Zulfiqar Haider).

"In order to hand compose, four cases with numerous small boxes or compartments were used, in which all the letters and other symbols were stored in accordance with the language orthography, for proper visual display",



states 62-year-old Mohammad Sirajul Islam, a former compositor who has been working for 36 years at Saogat Press. "Among the four cases, two were placed in front of us (one is flat and another is tilted), and the other two were set up on the left and right sides," he adds.

Journalists used to write the manuscripts of their reports on newsprints. The compositors used to put the manuscripts in front of them and after picking up relevant alphabets from the appropriate boxes, they would set the types by hand in a frame, letter by letter and line by line, according to the column, with proper and consistent spacing. The catchy headlines were printed through the larger blocks. After setting the alphabets, another person would place single pages on a dais and apply pressure on the press machine to print the letters.

The chance of spelling mistakes was low in prior times, as the compositors used to arrange the types by placing the manuscripts in front of them.

"Whatever mistakes would occur, the proofreaders used to made corrections through the proof machine, which is



known as 'galley proof', says 60-year-old Fazal Khandker, machine operator at Saogat Press. "After that, in accordance with the corrections, the types in the frame would be set up once again", he adds.

Once the first proof was done, the copy would prepare for second and final proof and finally the bindings were done to form a whole publication. Such difficult work would be unimaginable to those of us who print and publish in this digital age.

In the 80's, when Bangladesh witnessed a big transformation in printing,

the fonts (made of lead) used for long years, were replaced by computers, compositors and printing software. And today, it's very rare to find the previous composing machines.

New technologies and systems may have taken over the old process, but even today, just the sight of an old compositor can make people feel nostalgic. Though it would take a much longer time compared to the digital age, there was an outstanding flow of motion in all the tasks, for which it never seemed too laborious. ■