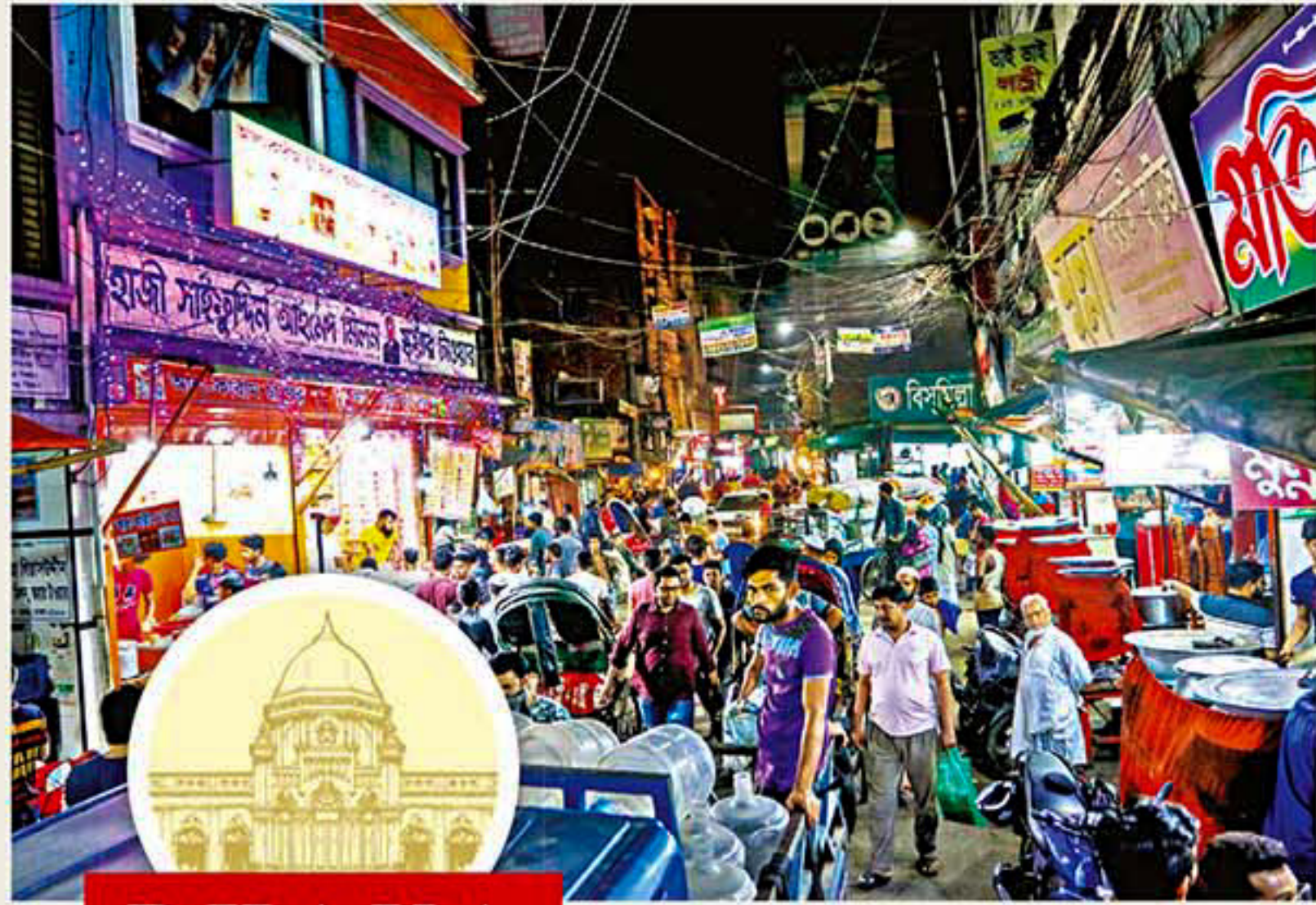


OLD VS NEW TOWN: A SEHRI STORY

|| MH HAIDER ||



DHAKA VIBE

An ever-so-bustling Nazira Bazar street wears the look of early evening even in the late hours of night, as hundreds throng the area for their choice of biryani and other Old Dhaka specials. Restaurant workers are also swift in serving the customers sehri on time (top); Chef's Table in Dhanmondi and Premium Sweets in Gulshan-2 see their fair share of patrons (bottom), albeit in an entirely different setting.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Call me old-fashioned, but I am rather unconvinced when it comes to dining out for sehri. For me, it is a meal to be dealt with swiftly and without much fuss at home, with half-closed sleepy eyes and in pyjamas. But it seems for the rest of Dhaka, it is a different story.

What was still an emerging trend just around a decade ago, is now a full-blown affair: people going out for sehri with gusto and restaurants all over Dhaka offering delicious treats.

Finally succumbing to peer-pressure, I decided to try it out, embarking on a nocturnal journey through Dhaka -- to understand what the hype is all about and on a hunt for the best places offering sehri.

MAKING SENSE OF NAZIRA BAZAR

Old town's Nazira Bazar is a prime hub for sehri, drawing crowds not just from the surrounding neighbourhoods but from all over

the city. Post-midnight, the air becomes thick with festivity -- with the smell of kebab, biriyani and chaap.

As late as say, 2am, massive pots of biriyani entice the passers-by, egg parathas are tirelessly cooked on enormous tawa, and even

barbershops are crowded with their clients!

"From Bismillah Kabab Ghar to Hajir Biriyani to the lesser known eateries, Nazira Bazar is a haven for Pura Dhaka delicacies," said Tariq Ahsan, a university student who lives in Uttara. "Driving to Nazira

Bazar once or twice in Ramadan has become a sort of tradition for me and my friends. Moreover, prices are cheap; just Tk 300 can be more than enough for one person."

Nazira Bazar doesn't sleep: a lot of the eateries remain open till very late throughout the year, not just

during Ramadan.

Some shops, like the iconic Beauty Lacchi -- famous for its lassi and lemonade -- generally shuts down around 1am. During the month of Ramadan, it remains open for sehri.

And then there is the popular

Pannu Khan Tea Store. Their tea is a decent treat, until you request for some "extra malai" -- that's when it transforms into something magical.

And finally to wrap up the gastronomical journey, one can indulge in "mishti paan" from a couple of street-side stalls which boldly make various concoctions with a staggering number of ingredients -- giving you a burst of flavours in the mouth.

BREAKING FREE AT CHEF'S TABLE Away from the hustle and bustle of old town is Chef's Table, a food court in Dhanmondi.

Food courts of course have the advantage of offering a diverse range of cuisines, providing you many options to choose from, and Chef's Table seems to have set a new standard in Dhaka's food scene.

"Generally, food courts are made up of random or relatively less familiar brands of eateries -- providing moderate or, at best,

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DHAKA TODAY

PANJABI EXHIBITION
Organiser: Maher Azam
Venue: Unimart, Gulshan 2
Time: 11am

Mohakhali DOHS
Time: 9am

THEATRE
Shikhondi
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Time: 7:30pm

APPAREL EXHIBITION
Sumaya Khan - Spring/Summer 2019 Collection
Venue: Bistro E, Gulshan 2
Time: 11am

FAIR
Venue: Raowa Convention Hall,

FAIR
Eid Uddokta Mela
Venue: Wari Party Center
Time: 11am

Rundown buses root cause of accidents: Quader

Calls for disciplined driving during Eid rush

STAFF CORRESPONDENT


Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday called for disciplined driving during the rush of holidaymakers ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr to prevent road accidents and traffic congestion.

He said condition of roads this year is relatively better than previous years' but it will all be meaningless if drivers do not exercise discipline.

Quader also called upon the leaders of transport owners' and workers' organisations to convey the message to drivers who will transport home-goers to their destinations.

The minister made the call at a meeting of stakeholders, to ensure safe and smooth journey of holidaymakers during the Eid vacation, at the head office of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in the capital's Banani.

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RAMADAN TIPS

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Fasting and Women Hormonal Health Issues

Ramadan fasting is beneficial in women suffering from Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome as it reduces stress hormonal levels i.e. serum cortisol and noradrenaline. Fasting also reduces stress neurohormone levels and improves physical and mental health in these women. Further women can safely fast after menopause and can continue taking estrogen replacement therapy once a day.

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Consultant, Obstetrics & Gynaecology

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'It did not happen in Bangladesh' Says Hanif about paddy field set on fire

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif yesterday said BNP-Jamaat was involved in conspiracy whenever they got a chance.

"BNP-Jamaat hatched the conspiracy... The incident, which went viral on Facebook, did not take place in Bangladesh. It was an incident in Punjab, India where a crop field was set ablaze," he said.

He was addressing a seminar at the AL office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Hanif added it has already been unearthed how a Khulna BNP leader provoked jute mill workers to go for demonstrations.

3 eateries fined

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Metropolitan Police, during a drive, fined three restaurants Tk 2.20 lakh in Mohammadpur and Dhanmondi areas yesterday.

Executive Magistrate of the DMP, Abdullah Al Mamun, led the mobile court. The mobile court fined Nahar Hotel and Restaurant of Mohammadpur Krishi Market Tk 1 lakh, Crimson Cup Coffee House of Dhanmondi Tk 1 lakh and Hakka Dhaka of Dhanmondi Tk 20,000 for keeping rotten food and preparing food in unhygienic environment.

Country needs political reform

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A reform in politics is needed to establish rule of law in the country and an exploitation free society, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

They said politics have become polluted and there is no alternative to bringing change to the current political culture.

They made the remarks at a roundtable on "Reformation of Bangladesh's Politics and Citizens' Thoughts", organised by Shushasoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) at Brac Centre Inn.

M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, expressed his frustration over political parties not raising their voice regarding irregularities in the immediate past national election.

"It has been proven that free, fair polls are not possible under any political party. We need to find out alternative options, such as caretaker government, to hold the election," he said.

Former Election Commissioner M Sakhawat Hossain said, "There is no alternative to decentralisation of power." Expressing concerns over the shrinking of liberal democratic process around the world, he said ultra-rightist views are spreading and it can rise in Bangladesh too.

Rights activist Hamida Hossain said people are living in such pressure that they cannot even speak about rights violations committed against them.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said a political party after forming the government with two-third or three-fourth majority begins to ignore people, though the constitution states that people are the source of all power.

She alleged that the government is using law enforcement agencies to enforce repressive laws on people.

Zonayed Saki, coordinator of Ganasamhati Andolon, said a reform is must to give parties scope to take part in politics.

Pointing out corruption in government sectors, Abdullah Al Kafi Ratan, a leader of Communist Party of Bangladesh, said, "Had 350 MPs of the parliament been free from corruption, no one else would dare to commit it."

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shujan, alleged that the ruling system is almost broken and if it continues the country will turn into a failed state. Sujan will work to create public opinion on political reform, he said.

At the roundtable, the civil rights organisation highlighted 18 sectors including political and election culture, parliamentary system, judiciary and administration, where reforms are needed.

Doa mehfil for Shakhawat Mubin

CITY DESK

A doa mehfil for the late Shakhawat Mubin Chowdhury (Shahan) will be held tomorrow (May 25) after Zohr prayers at house 31, Road 12A in Dhanmondi, according to a press release.

Shakhawat Mubin passed away on May 20, after suffering a massive heart attack. He was a business executive and younger brother of former foreign secretary Shamsheer M Chowdhury.

EX-HUSBAND MURDER Woman, three accomplices get death

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a woman -- and three others -- to death, for killing her ex-husband and cutting the dead body into seven pieces in April 2013. The convicts are Shoma Akhter Kakoli, Anwar Hossain Mollah, Sharif Matbor, and Ibrahim Khalil. Of the convicts, Anwar and Kakoli were produced before the court by police, while the two others have been absconding. Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka handed down the sentence. The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of

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