

Understanding the business of silver in Old Dhaka

Neel Paul does not look up immediately when someone enters the workshop. His hands remain steady, bent over a thin strip of silver, filing its edge with precision born of repetition rather than instruction. When asked how long he has been in this business, he answers, "Thirty years... more than that now," after a pause, without breaking rhythm.

This is a common scene in Tantibazar, tucked within the dense fabric of Old Dhaka. The word "tanti" may suggest weaving, textiles, or threads. However, the bazaar has long shifted its identity. It is now a centre of gold and silver, where they are stocked, traded, negotiated, and constantly recalculated. And though gold draws attention, it is the silver that sustains the system.