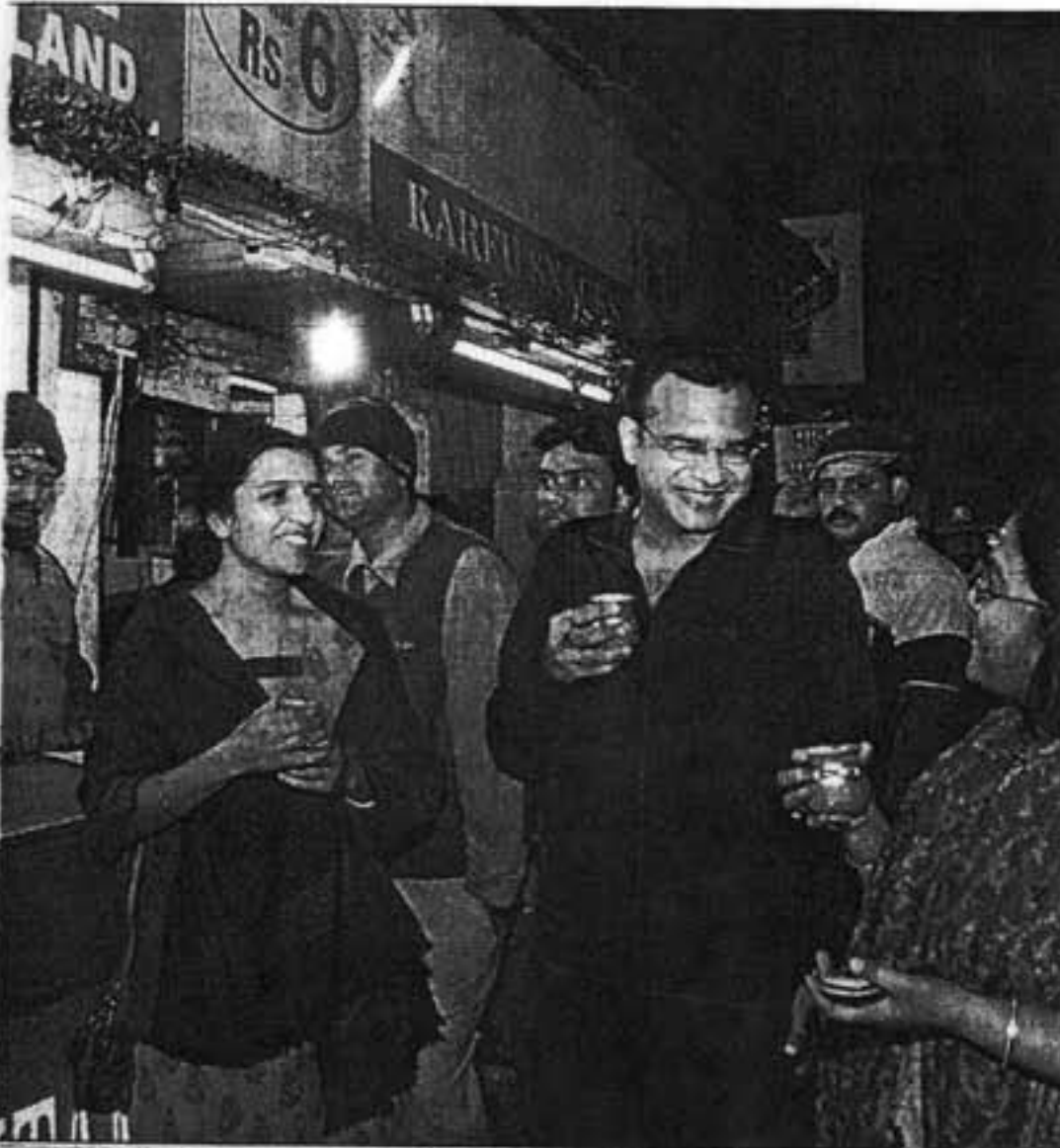


# Drive-in buzz & bites



**I**f you are driving down from Ultadanga to Salt Lake stadium, you can't possibly miss a cluster of shops lining the EM Bypass. What was an isolated spot not so long ago is now a fun munch corridor crowded with everything from Hero Honda to Honda City.

Goodlife drove down to the streetside hangout that is too hot to bypass.

## Hot spot

A cluster of six or seven shops on P. Duttabad Road, about a five-minute drive from Ultadanga, before you hit Salt Lake stadium.

## Time out

The kitchens are open from 4 pm till midnight. Weekends see crowds hanging around till the other side of midnight. Monday is the day off.

## Fact file

The first shop here was opened in 1995. "I would sit here from dawn to dusk waiting for a customer. But somehow Lady Luck did not smile on this place.

Slowly, many shops opened here but the business moved at snail's pace. Things have really changed in the last couple of years," says Goutam Karmakar of Goutam's (picture left by Rashbehari Das).

## Pop pick

Why is it such a popular point? The stalls are ordinary, the munch menu is commonplace. So why does the car crowd slam the brakes right here? Is it the bohemian nature of the place or a classic case of *long drive jayenge*,

*bhelpuri khayenge...?*

"Sipping hot coffee or even having an ice-cream on the Bypass gives you the feeling of being at a *dhaba* on a highway. Last year, we even celebrated our niece's birthday there. We

## HOT HANGOUT

cut the cake on the bonnet of the car and told them to serve the snacks there," says Sanjay Swarup, who often drives down to the Bypass hangout from his Bhowanipore home.

## Fun munch

From momo to mutton roll, chowmein to *chaap*, all it needs is a five-minute drool before you dig in. "The reason people make a stop here and grab a quick bite is for the good service we provide. There is adequate parking space and we serve the food real quick," feels Nitya

Khondikar, owner of Karfu Snacks. His counter serves Chinese and Indian food which includes *pakor*s, soups, noodles and *tandoori*.

But it's his nephew's shop Goutam's that is the anchor store here. "People started coming here to taste the variety of coffee and blossoms. The other shops selling snacks came up long after I started. Now, people buy the food there and wash it down with the array of beverages I serve,"

says Goutam, surprised how orders for iced-tea and cold coffee are still pouring in.

And there are innovations galore. Cold coffee with ice-cream means cold coffee put on a block of ice-cream and served with a straw and spoon! Then there's Blossoms, Soda Shikanji and Masala Cola. The popular pick this season is Hot Chocolate with ice-cream. The price range: Rs 5 to Rs 50.

Zeeshan Jawed

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