



The city experienced a very thin traffic during the six-day Eid holiday.

A respite from traffic jam, air pollution

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Abdur Rahim looked delighted to reach his office at Karwan Bazar within 15 minutes on Wednesday as he joined back after Eid holidays.

"It is unimaginable. Would you believe usually it takes nearly 45 minutes to reach there from my home at Mirpur," he said.

Though the six-day long holiday ended and people got back to work on Wednesday, festivity is still visible on city roads leaving the commuters much relieved from ever-continuing traffic congestion.

"I had to stop for only 50 seconds at traffic signals while going to Pallabi from New Market," said Farhaduddin, a CNG autorickshaw driver. "I wish if the

roads were always deserted like this."

Hamid Ali, a private car driver, said it is unthinkable to drive on major roads without any gridlock. "But I was able to cross the flyover at Mohakhali without stopping," he said narrating his experience.

"The other day (before Eid) I was stuck for half an hour there," Ali recalled.

Not that the empty roads only helped people reach their destinations early, it also reduced the level of air pollution. "Air pollution in the city decreased significantly for the ban on two-stroke three-wheelers. It reduces more during holidays," said Shahana Akter of Air Quality Monitoring System.

The absence of continuous

honking of vehicles gave the city people a respite from noise pollution as well. "It is a curse if you live near a major street with heavy vehicles honking throughout the day. At least we get relief from it for these few days," said Selimuzzaman, a resident of Mohakhali.

However, the respite period did not last long as people who left for Eid holidays started returning to the city. Most of them resumed work on Thursday or Saturday.

Moving out of residents in holidays is typical of any mega city in developing countries, Professor Nazrul Islam, chairman, Urban Planning Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, told Star City.

"At least 60 percent of total population of Dhaka is temporary residents," he said. The capital now houses around 10 million people.

He commented the temporary residents are mostly day-labourers and workers in formal sectors like garment factories and fourth-class employees who stay here leaving their families at village home. "They go back home on holidays as it is a part of the tradition," he said.

However, when asked the professor said these people cannot settle in Dhaka permanently as the city does not offer enough amenities. He said most of the temporary residents are under served in the city.

Public toilet sleaze

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is scrambling to construct 56 public toilets in time as the project ends on December 31.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) last year allocated \$1 million last year for construction of 70 public toilets under the Urban Primary Health Care Project (UPHCP). But the first work order for construction of 32 toilets was issued on May 19 while the second work order was issued on July 19. Land crisis and disputes forced the DCC to curtail its plan to construct only 56 toilets.

It was alleged that the DCC is desperate to use the funds before the project deadline and constructing the toilets in an unplanned way.

According to the project proposal, the toilets were supposed to be constructed on unused

land.

Sources in the Nagarbhawan said some of these 'hurriedly constructed' public toilets would be demolished soon after their constructions as they occupy parks and open spaces. The toilet at Osmani Uddyan, a major open space in Dhaka, is one of them. DCC Chief Engineer and President of the Technical Committee on Osmani Uddyan Md Idris Mian sent a letter on October 10 to the UPHCP asking for postponement of the toilet's construction.

"We have decided to demolish illegal structures on Osmani Uddyan and beautify the park. We have to demolish the newly constructed toilets there," a senior official in the engineering division of the DCC said seeking anonymity.

Meanwhile, the DCC is constructing another public toilet on a park at Jatrabari intersection

although, according to the project, it was supposed to be built on unused land. The DCC is also constructing public toilets on a park at Motijheel.

"The only walking space and playground for us has been destroyed in the name constructing toilets," said Julfikar, a resident of Jatrabari.

Another public toilet in front of Martyr Memorial in Mirpur created huge public reaction and DCC is adamant to continue the construction work of the toilets.

"DCC chosen most of the places for public toilet is wrong as it occupied open spaces even sensitive spot like Martyr Memorial which is related to our deep feeling of liberation war," said Rizwana Hasan, director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA).

"Public in front of Martyr Memorial is also a dishonour of

our intellectuals who sacrificed their lives for liberation," she commented.

However, DCC's Chief State Officer Abu Taleb, responsible for maintenance of the city parks, said the site for the toilet was selected a year ago before he joined the corporation.

"We have 56 public toilets being constructed which are expected to be completed by end of December," said Dr Md Nurul Islam, project director UPHCP. He, however, denied the allegation of 'hurriedly and indiscriminately construction' of 56 public toilets.

"As our project is ended on December 31, naturally we are trying to meet the dead line, but we are not in a hurry only for using the fund," Islam said.

"Seventy public toilets is not enough for a city like Dhaka where more than one crore people reside. We would like to construct more public toilets but where is the land?"

Sources said land crisis has compelled the authorities to renovate some old public toilets instead of constructing new ones.

However, The city of 10 million people has a very few public toilets, most of which has been captured by criminals who do not pay lease money to the DCC on regular basis. It is difficult for people to get inside the public toilets as most of these lavatories go under criminals' control after dusk that forces people to discharge excreta under open sky.

DCC chief executive officer MA Momen told the Star City that public toilet should be in proper place. He, however, denied the allegation of indiscriminate location of public toilet. He said, "a DCC team surveyed and decided the places in a planned way."

Osmani Uddyan losing charm on growing illegal structures

SULTANA RAHMAN

A good number of so-called 'legal' and illegal structures, both concrete and makeshifts, have been established in and around Osmani Uddyan -- a major public park in Dhaka -- damaging its natural harmony.

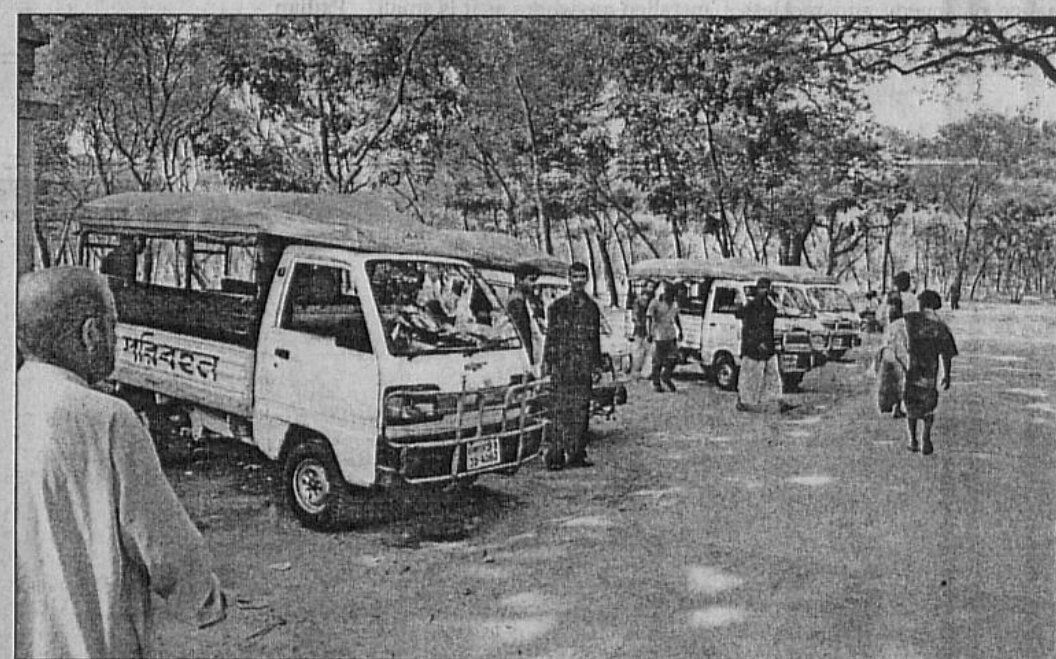
The encroachments raised indiscriminately are gradually shrinking the 23-acre park in the heart of the city. The latest addition is a public toilet constructed by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) at an inconvenient place.

Another portion of the park has become an open garage and parking zone for vehicles of public transport. People keep vehicles there for various purposes including washing and repairing.

"I don't know whether we have permission to use the place for parking. It is an open place and nobody forbids us from parking there," said Khalil, a staff of a transport company.

A well-shaped eatery made of bamboo and tin has been established facing Golap Shah Mazar. "We set up the restaurant with permission from the land owner Monwar Begum," said Elias Hossain, manager of the restaurant.

Monwar and some others occupied 2.81 acres of land in the park and put up signboards there in July 2001. But the authorities evicted them in the face of a public outcry and filed a case



A part of Osmani Uddyan in the city is used for parking vehicles.

against them which is now pending.

At another side of the park, there is a tin-shed office of ruling BNP's labour wing Jatayatbadi Sramik Dal (ward no 56 unit). The office, just opposite of the central telephone office, has no permission at all.

"It is an open area and the party office serves the interest of general workers. For the greater interest of labourer community we set up the office here," said an

official of the unit seeking not to be named.

There are also two tin-shed food shops behind the Sramik Dal office. In addition to these, 10 small shops have been set up illegally inside the park.

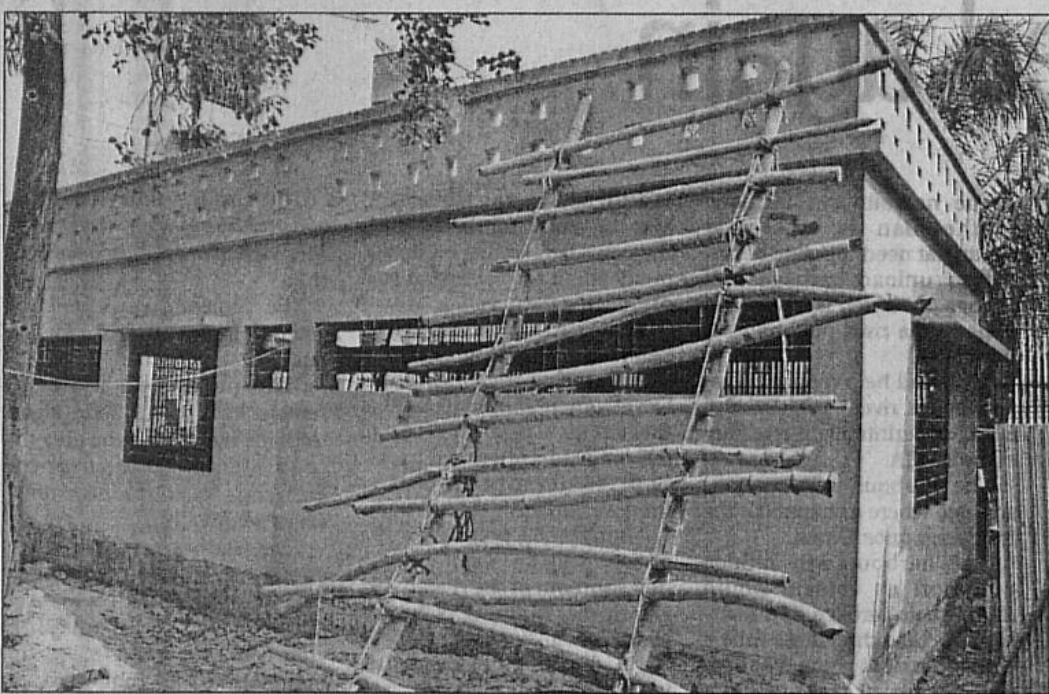
"We pay the police and a local leader Tk 100 a day," claimed the owner of a makeshift shop in the park.

However, a technical committee headed by Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, has been

formed to restore the natural harmony of Osmani Uddyan by uprooting the illegal structures.

Sources at the DCC said the technical committee is now preparing its report and expected to submit it by next month.

"Initially we are thinking to plant trees after removing some environment unfriendly trees. We also have plan to make the park convenient for public and arrange playing instruments for children," said a DCC official.



The public toilet in Osmani Uddyan, one of the 70 toilets being constructed by DCC.

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International

Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Balsakhki Courier Service- 9558606
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884

Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National

Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802

Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundaban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd.- 9112068, Fax- 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640-4, 9886395
The Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Intl- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo

National Museum- 8619396-9

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3

pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed

Muktijuddha Jadugar-

9559091

Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm,

Sunday Closed

Bangabandhu Smriti Jadugar-

8110046

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday

closed

Ahsan Manzil

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3

pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed

Shishu Jadugar- 9666466

Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday

Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No. Route

1 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12
2 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2
3 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Magbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Magbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Magbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgaon-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammadpur
14 Signboard-Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12
24 Gulistan-Magbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile

Starts from

Golap Shah Mazar
Phoolbaria bus station
Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur
Sayedabad
Kamalapur
Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachatter
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ranimahal
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan