



the city that was

Pogoz School founded by N.P. Pogoz, better known as Niki Pogoz, and Armenian businessman and social worker on June 12, 1848 is one of the oldest and famous in Dhaka. At least 96 students of Dhaka College had to leave unable to pay tuition fees. T.A. Waize, the then civil surgeon established "Union School" for those who could not pay. But funds came from Pogoz, a former Dhaka College student.

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Unmarked speed-breakers causing accidents



Many speed breakers on the streets of Dhaka are cause for accidents. Drivers cannot spot them, and speeding vehicles often face such mishaps

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Unmarked speed-breakers at different points on the city roads are causing accidents, especially at night, as people cannot see them while driving.

"These speed-breakers are causing accidents. Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is supposed to mark the speed-breakers," said Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan, deputy commissioner (Traffic-South) of DMP.

"We have requested DCC's

traffic engineering department several times to take initiative in this regard," Pathan added. But the officials of DCC do not know who is responsible for the job.

Mahbub Alam, assistant engineer of traffic engineering department said: "We are against the concept (of speed-breaker). So we do not take care of the speed-breakers. Zonal officials are responsible for this structures."

DCC builds these structures in the city in an unscientific way,

without considering the fact that it would cause accidents if not marked.

"Actually DCC constructed the speed-breakers on request. It is not part of our planning or designing. But I agree it is necessary to mark them for road safety," said Abul Hasnat, DCC's executive engineer of Zone 6.

"The functions of DCC's newly formed traffic engineering department have not been fixed yet. Speed-breaker marking will go under its supervision."

"Last week a Mishuk (autorickshaw) overturned hitting the speed-breaker on Noorjahan Road in Mohammadpur, injuring its two passengers," said Kamrul, a shop-owner near the speed-breaker.

"This is stupidity. They have to mark the speed-breakers properly or remove them from the road," said Sajjad Alam Bobby, an Azimpur resident who suffers while driving his car to his office every morning.



Unheard calls for traffic complaints



There is hardly any impact of the police phone numbers displayed on the rear of CNG autorickshaws.

CHRISTINE WANNER

"For traffic complaints, dial 011-806111, 011-806222, 011-806888." The yellow advertisements can hardly be overseen on Dhaka's streets, as they are applied on CNG-autorickshaw rears.

But honestly, have you ever dialled one of these numbers to call the police when a CNG or a taxi refused to take you where you wanted to go? Or worse, when you just faced harassment or even mugging? And if you did dial: was your call answered?

A number of passengers and drivers think they know why people don't resort to the traffic complaints: The people are doubtful about remedy. The police needs to improve their image about responding to

public calls.

But the police says their services are prompt when there is a complaint. It is the expensive cellphone call charges that discourage people to call.

Three years ago, CityCell donated three cellphones to traffic complaints. Its idea was simple: these numbers will help passengers and the police; at the same time these will promote its brand name.

GrameenPhone has also made similar donations, which are used for the same purpose in the traffic control department. The numbers 017-1000990, 017-1000991 and 017-1000992, you get to see seldom on the back of the CNG autorickshaws. If so, they are hand-written. GrameenPhone has rather published them

through newspaper ads.

"There are complaint calls," says Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan, deputy commissioner, Traffic (South) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police. "People complain about not being carried where they wanted to be or about being mugged. But, what concerns the frequency of the calls -- it is not as often as we had expected."

Asked for the statistics, Pathan denied, as the incoming calls are not counted.

While talking to The Daily Star, CNG and taxi drivers just wonder about the impact of this service. "No, I have not yet seen any impact because someone called one of those numbers. People are hardly aware about that service," says a CNG driver.

Passengers' reactions fit into

the pattern: "Why waste time!" utters Monsur Ahmed. "I have never dialled any phone number to complain about a taxi or a CNG driver. Besides, I just do not believe in their being effective."

Next to him, another passenger shares his thoughts. "In the city, people have stopped to think collectively. No one would help, not even the police would come."

"If somebody calls, police is there in five minutes!" says Pathan. As very few people own a cellphone, the service is yet to be popular, he believes.

One of these three help-lines provided by CityCell remains down for a month now. Pathan has sought help to restore the line. "But I did not get any reply so far."

"We donated that service to the DMP. Now it is responsible for it. We know, it is not effective to hundred percent, but it is still better than nothing," says Intekhab Mahmud, CityCell's head of marketing and sales.

"When we got to know one service was out of order, we reacted immediately and fixed it. But still, there must be a disconnection, a failure of DMP's phone set that we cannot repair," Mahmud explained.

To ameliorate the situation, CityCell is planning to introduce a location-based short code in the next week that would connect the calling person with the nearest police station, Mahmud noted. "You know, we carry a social responsibility."

Curtain falls on fair of force & feeling

SYED TASHFİN CHOWDHURY

'Military Hardware Exhibition - 2004' that entertained over a hundred thousand people daily, giving them the opportunity to feast their eyes on a huge amount of arms, ammunition, artillery, along with explanations on survival and army techniques, terms from Bangladesh Army personnel for the last five days, ends today.

The exhibition took place at the National Parade grounds, adjacent to the old airport.

"I learnt a lot and on seeing what the military tasks are, I have much respect for our force," said Rezaul Islam, a university student, who visited the fair yesterday.

The fair grounds were decorated with a mixture of creativity and practicality, making it unique this year.

Maps and informative charts of the stalls and details of the various weapons were much

appreciated by the crowds.

The army pavilion with over 33 stalls displayed items like tanks, artillery guns, 60 mm mortars, anti aircraft cannons, anti aircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles.

Most college and university students thronged the para-commando stall showing interest in the arms, survival techniques and gears on display.

Rabbits, pigeons, turtles and various kinds of reptiles were also on display as these species are the only food most commandos find for survival in deserts or uninhabited combat zones. Besides the army pavilion, the grandly decorated Air force and Navy pavilions also attracted large crowds.

The Air force pavilion had a number of miniature planes, missiles, air craft models like A-5, PT-6, Hercules C-130 on display. Souvenirs were also being sold at a few stalls.

The Navy pavilion displayed four replicas of their ships where visitors got the feel what a Navy ship and its armaments were, while maps, uniforms, navy gear that were on show enthralled most visitors.

Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory (BMTE) in its stall displayed ambulances, water trailers, pickup vans, tractors and mobile workshops.

"The artillery stall was possibly the best," said Rezaul, when asked about his favourite.

"At least over 1 to 2 lakh visitors were entertained daily," said a soldier, on the site.

Even though, the timings of the fair were from eight to five, the fair sometimes dragged on till 6:30 because of public demand.

"This just goes to show the curiosity and concern people have for the military and only through these events, can their feelings be appeased," said the soldier.

