



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.

Traffic mess continues to choke Karwan Bazar

Site for parking lot occupied again as city fathers sit on the plan

TAWFIQUE ALI

Traffic mess continues to choke Karwan Bazar, one of city's busiest commercial hubs, with the city corporation yet to build car parking facility at the designated site in the area.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has a plan to develop a multi-storied parking facility at the place from where the joint forces in a drive in January 2007 removed illegal makeshift shops, offices of different political parties and vendors.

However, DCC has not yet been able to remove a number of grocery shops in the western side of the parking area, as it formally leased out the land. Rickshaw vans, garbage and stockpiles of grocery goods always keep the place occupied, sources said.

Syed Kudrat Ullah, superintendent engineer of DCC's Traffic Engineering Division and project director of Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP), said that the process to develop a hard standing pavement for car parking bay at the site is underway.

"The project is approved. The tender committee will hold a meeting by next week," he said.

Regarding land lease within car parking area, he said, "It is a yearly-basis contract, which we may cancel. We can remove them once the parking facility is developed."

Traffic police, on the other

hand, remain mysteriously silent on the unauthorised car parking and occupancy by petty traders on the 100-foot main road and other alleys in the area.

Illegally-parked vehicles

occupy the widest thoroughfare in the area, between Karwan Bazar kitchen market and Ambar Shah Mosque, causing public sufferings the whole day.

Staff buses and cars belonging

to different government and private offices, banks and commercial establishments, are parked on the main road in double file on both the sides, by 10 in the morning turning the entire area almost impassable.

Scores of pick-up vans for hire stand in long queue right in front of the DCC Kitchen Market occupying a considerable portion of the public road.

Fruit and chicken traders occupy the other side of the road. At 9:45 in the morning on May 3, a white pick-up van was found parked right in the middle of the road bringing the traffic movement to standstill. Driver of the vehicle was not available.

Awlad Ali Fakir, DMP deputy commissioner (traffic west), said though it is their responsibility to streamline traffic mess in the public thoroughfares, they cannot maintain the traffic situation everywhere in the city because of manpower constraints.

He said that his department once took an initiative to put a control over traffic chaos and unauthorised occupancy of the public roads at Karwan Bazar. "But success of the drive sustained for just a week. Such occasional drives cannot achieve long-term success," he added.

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) handed over to DCC a piece of land to the east of the kitchen market for development and maintenance as a car parking space. But DCC in violation of the master plan leased out the parking area to make room for 160 makeshift shops.

The shops had been running for decades under direct patronage of professional criminals and extortionists backed by two major political parties, sources said.

Urban Primary Health Care Project of DCC has set up a public toilet on the eastern side of the car parking space a couple of years back. The toilet is now abandoned.

During the tenure of mayor Mohammad Hanif, DCC leased out a road in Karwan Bazar to the wholesale traders. After Sadeque Hossain Khoka took over as mayor he too leased out a children's park to the traders of the kitchen market.

The park was set up in 1985 on two bighas of land and continued as children's park for next several years. It was turned into a vegetable market in 2005.



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Top, Site for parking lot, occupied by rickshaw vans, shows no sign of being freed from the grip of encroachers and, above, traffic jam has become a regular feature at Karwan Bazar.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

After his brilliant 'Rajoshik' in front of the Hotel Sheraton, sculptor Mrinal Haque has presented the city with another magnificent work 'Prottyasha'. The sculpture, built on the theme of Liberation War and world peace, has been set up on the triangular island adjacent to Bangabazar Government Employees Hospital. Sponsored by the Dhaka City Corporation, it was inaugurated by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday.

Roadside food 'popular' source of diseases

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Roadside food and beverages remain popular in the city as always in spite of the spread of food and waterborne diseases.

Consumers and sellers care very little about the hygiene and nutrition value of the foods. This has added to the worsening situation of diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases this summer, experts said.

Day labourers, rickshaw pullers and people from low-income groups tend to drink

Asked about boiling water, Pradeep, a day-labourer from Green Road, said, "I will think about it if I catch a disease."

Md Rahim, another rickshaw-puller from Goran, said, "Everybody is drinking supply water so I am also doing the same."

Roadside fruit vendors do not maintain cleanliness. Most of the time the knives used for slicing fruits are seldom washed.

In roadside tea stalls, one bucket of water is used for

have money to arrange these. I am already burdened with the soaring price of rice," he said.

Other fruit and tea vendors voiced the same opinion.

Sliced green mango, watermelon, cucumber, chana, jhal muri, pickles, chotpoti, sugarcane juice, aloe vera juice and beef kebab top the list of street-side food lovers.

Many have the habit of munching on food while walking and buying roadside food without thinking whether those food are fit for eating.

"I need something to munch on while walking. Who cares whether those are healthy or not," said Rizvi, a private university student.

"I never think about the hygiene of the roadside food. They are more tasty than those cooked at home. May be because they add an extra spice made of street side dust!" Morshed, a student of Jahangirnagar University, said humorously.

According to experts, people from lower income brackets are main victims of diarrhoea for lack of awareness and poor sanitation.

Dr Iqbal Hossain, an associate scientist at the ICDDR,B said that diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, hepatitis A and jaundice can attack after intake of unhygienic food and water.

The practice of boiling water is almost absent among those who use firewood and other means of fuel other than natural gas, he said.

"Hot tea is comparatively less harmful if the teacups are washed with full boiled water. But if washed with normal or merely warm water then the risk remains," said Dr Iqbal.

In summer rivers and brooks, that are sources of drinking water, are dried up and contain high concentration of bacteria, he added.

Sources at ICDDR,B said that patients are pouring into the hospital as diarrhoea situation has worsened in the city. Most of those admitted to the hospital are rickshaw-pullers and day labourers.

The number of diarrhoea patients peak in May every year, they said.



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unclean water from street side sources.

"It becomes secondary whether the water is boiled when I drink from roadside sources because most of the time I remain very much tired after carrying passengers in this sweltering heat," said Barek Molla, a rickshaw-puller from Shyamoli.

"I know that water should be boiled but I don't drink boiled water at home because I don't have the time to boil water," he said.

washing the cups and plates all daylong.

"I know that boiled water should be used to wash the sliced fruits. But I use a bucket of supply water for this purpose. If I want to keep clean and boiled water I will have to carry gallons of water for which I will have to buy some buckets and a big cart to carry those. Besides, I will have to boil the water," said Wahidur Rahman, a vendor selling white flesh melon on the Dhaka University campus.

"To tell you the truth I don't

Vehicles with dark shaded glasses up

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Many car owners in the city ignore the government instructions not to use tinted glass in the vehicle due to a lack of strict enforcement of the ban.

Use of dark shaded glasses in car windows is a violation of traffic rules and offenders are supposed to be fined an amount between Tk 400 and Tk 2,500.

"It seems to be a worrying trend among motorists and motorcyclists to fit tinted glass in car windows or use helmet with tinted visors," said Jasimuddin, joint traffic commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

According to globally accepted laws, front windows of a vehicle must allow 70 percent of light through and the front windscreen 75 percent. But there are many illegal tints seen in cars on Dhaka's streets letting as little as 10 percent light through. Traffic officers believe such excessive tints are potentially dangerous, particularly at night.

"Excessive tinting of windows has a similar effect to wearing sunglasses at night. They can seriously reduce a driver's visibility making it harder to spot potential hazards such as pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles," said Sohail Arman, a traffic sergeant.

Traffic police officers said tinted car windows are prohibited so that criminals cannot travel under the cover of dark

shades to avoid detection.

Tinted glass is usually used in vehicles carrying VIPs for security reasons, they said.

The home ministry sometimes gives permission for using tinted glass to VIPs considering the necessity. But such glasses on private automobiles have become very common lately.

Traffic police officials break down the offenders into three groups.

There are some innocent car purchasers who just want their cars to look stylish and nicer. There are criminals who seek to hide behind the windows. Then there are people who consider tinted windows as some kind of a fashion.

Abu Syed Sarkar, a car importer, blamed an increasingly celebrity-obsessed media for the rising use of tinted windows.

"People these days believe

status is reflected in the cars they drive," he said. "Super-sized chrome rims, massive sound systems, DVD, and mystery glass -- they want the full package," he said.

Considering the rising demand, unscrupulous traders are importing automobiles fitted with tinted glasses and openly selling them at showrooms. Glasses are being tinted with special papers in some cases,



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