



Motijheel in downtown was built during the Mughal period. During the time there was a big Mahal for Mirja Mohammad which housed a large pond known as Sukaku Mahal's pond. The area was later named Motijheel. A mazar called Shahjalal's mazar where fairs were organised existed. Motijheel and Dilkusha gardens were in the same place earlier. The road dividing the two places was constructed during the British rule.

## Kids brace for admission battle in govt schools

Form distribution begins December 14

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Children along with their parents and guardians in the city are preparing for admission tests of government schools for the academic year 2009.

Distribution of admission form is scheduled to begin on December 14, which will continue till December 27 as per a decision taken by the

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (DSHE).

Admission forms can be collected from respective schools on the working days from 9:00am to 3:00pm. The price of form has been fixed at Tk100.

Students aspiring to have a seat from class 1 to 9 will have to take a 100-mark written tests on Bangla,

English and mathematics.

Like previous years the schools have been divided into three groups -- A, B and C -- based on the geographic location of the school.

The schools under Group A are Government Laboratory High School, Mirpur Government High School, Motijheel Government Girls' High School, Khilgaon

Government High School, Nawabpur Government High School, New Government Girls' High School, Islamia Government High School and Mohammadpur Government High School.

The Group B schools are Motijheel Government Boys' High School, Narinda Government High School, Government Muslim High School, Banglabazar Government Girls' High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Government Boys' School, Tejgaon Government Bigyan College High School, Dhanmondi Government Girls' High School and Dhanmondi Quamrunnessa Government Girls' High School.

The Group C schools are Armanitola Government High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Government Girls' High School, Dhaka Collegiate School, Ganabhaban Government High School, Tikatuli Quamrunnessa Government Girls' School, Tejgaon Government Girls' High School, Tejgaon Government High School and Dhanmondi Government Boys' High School.

Exam for group A will be held on January 4 followed by group B exam on January 6 and group C on January 10.



Parents and guardians crowd the counter of a private school at Maghbazar for admission forms on Friday. Government schools will distribute forms from December 14

## City's hapless street children

95pc of them growing up without any aid

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

More than 95 percent street children in the city remain out of any assistance either from government or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), experts say.

Deprived of their fundamental rights, these children are growing up without education.

The Department of Social Welfare that deals with the street children has no data on the number of the street children in the city at present.

However, a government baseline survey conducted in 2004 revealed that at least 2,49,000 street children were in the city in that year.

The survey under 'Appropriate resources for improving street children's environ-

ment project' conducted by the social welfare department indicated that the number of street children was increasing alarmingly in the city.

At present the government is implementing 'Protection of Children at Risk (PCAR)' project to mainstream the street children into society.

Under the project, the Department of Social Welfare in cooperation with its partner NGOs is providing assistance to the street children in the city since April 2007.

According to PCAR records, the project provided aid to about 3,000 street children in the city in the last 21 months.

"This project could cover only a fraction of the street children of the city," an

expert working for PCAR project said expressing frustration on the situation.

He said the government is providing food, shelter and some skill training to the street children in the city through five partner NGOs. These NGOs are operating four shelter homes in the capital. The project is scheduled to complete this month.

"Now the project is almost complete. But we don't know what will happen to these shelter homes if the project does not continue in future," said the expert.

Apart from the PCAR project, there are some other NGOs that are providing shelter to street children in the city but it is too small to be mentioned, he added.

Mohammad Abu al Hossain, project director of

PCAR, told Star City that the government is trying to address the problems of the increasing number of street children in the city.

The government is working hard to solve their problems. Several shelter homes have been launched through NGOs in Dhaka and other divisional cities, he said.

"But, practically without help from community and other sources, the government alone cannot solve the problems," he noted.

About continuation of PCAR project, he said the government is going to extend the assistance to the street children till December 2010.

Aminul Islam, coordinator of an NGO that has several shelter homes in the city said,

"We are operating shelter homes in the city under PCAR project but the coverage will not cross five percent of the total street children."

He said children outside the coverage of the government and NGO assistance often violate the rights of other street children.

Street children are found in bazaars, commercial areas, bus terminals, hotels and parks, on the pavements, around the stadium. They try to earn a living through collecting garbage, breaking bricks or pushing rickshaws. Some of them work in roadside tea stalls while some are just beggars. Some street children are involved in petty crime.

The underworld gangs use the street children in drug peddling, snatching, toll collection and other crimes.

Dr MSI Mullick, an associate professor of psychiatry at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, says children growing up in deprivation are accustomed to extreme behaviours, primarily because of inferiority complex. "You cannot expect good behaviour from a person who have not been treated well by others, can you?"



Three street boys: The number is increasing every day



A fair was held last month at the playground of Dhaka Central Park

STAR PHOTO

## DCC rents out playground keeping mayor in dark

TAWFIQUE ALI

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) continues to rent out playfields for commercial use despite government direction and public outcry against such use.

The corporation rented out the playground of Gulshan Central Park to Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) for two days in end-November for holding a fair.

But DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "I have not approved any lease of the playground at Gulshan Central Park for any fair recently. I am not even aware of it."

Khoka said he even declined to allow students of two departments of Dhaka University to hold a fund-raising programme for their ailing fellow students recently.

According to the DCC Estate Department records, the playground was rented out to WVA on September 14 to hold the fair on November 28-29.

Asked, DCC Chief Estate Officer Md Khalilur Rahman said they did not rent out the playground at Gulshan Central Park recently for commercial use.

"If approved, it was done long back," he said.

DCC rented out the playground for a wedding ceremony on December 26, 2007 and for a fair of handicrafts on December 1 the same year.

The field remained occupied with similar functions throughout January 2008.

MA Mutalib, office supervisor of WVA, said only the president of the

association could say how and when they took rent of the playground. But WVA President Anisa Haq asked this correspondent to know it from the DCC.

The National Sports Council (NSC) in November 2007 formally requested all agencies concerned not to use playgrounds for commercial purposes other than games and sports.

Hamid Begum, assistant director of NSC, said many organisations requested them to protect the city's fields as playgrounds and prevent any commercial uses of them for holding concerts, fair and wedding ceremonies.

"So, we wrote to the agencies concerned requesting them not to use playgrounds for other purposes than games and sports," she said.

But the city managers are renting out one playground or the other allowing commercial events like fair, musical concerts and wedding ceremonies in exchange of money, denying the locals of their right to have open space.

Shirin Shila, joint general secretary of Gulshan Society, said life and movement of the residents become miserable when such functions take place at the playground.

"It is needless to explain how annoying an event like a fair or a music concert taking place in a residential area," she said. "Residents in the immediate vicinity of the venue cannot even stay inside their houses because of noise and loud sound."

Movement in the area gets difficult due to traffic jam caused by huge gathering. Traffic on all the surrounding

roads comes to a standstill with enormous traffic loads.

"We have talked enough of it and complained a lot with the authorities concerned but there has been no difference so far," said a frustrated Shirin. "I am extremely frustrated with the situation as the neighbourhood has already become unliveable."

According to Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, a noted social analyst and head of a high-level advisory committee of DCC's park development and beautification, wasteful use of the playgrounds is just unacceptable.

Games and sports are essential for a healthy social life, said Prof Choudhury, adding that absence of sports facilities is responsible for artificiality, frustration and addiction in today's society.

DCC earns Tk 23,334 per day renting out the Gulshan Central Park playground.

Though custodian of the city's parks and playgrounds, DCC has always been insensitive to abuses of public spaces, city residents alleged.

A playground gets damaged as a result of installation of makeshift structures for commercial purposes.

Renting out a playground for otherwise uses goes against the spirit of a High Court order on 24 April 2004, said environmentalists.

The court directed DCC authorities to maintain Dhanmondi playground as a playground in the light of playground, open space and wetland protection act of 2000.



The Dhaka American Women's Club (DAWC) together with the American International School Dhaka PTA organised a fun filled Christmas charity bazaar on the school premises on Friday. Over a hundred participants including several NGOs displayed an assortment of handcrafted items, clothing, baked foods, books, toys and many more eye-catching products at the bazaar, which is organised every year by the club. Money raised by the event will be donated to local charities.

BY TEL ZAKIR HOSAIN