

MAZED SARDAR ROAD IN OLD DHAKA

## When waterlogging becomes a daily ordeal

HELEMUL ALAM

Mazed Sardar Road in Old Dhaka remains submerged under dirty water almost throughout the year.

Over a thousand people live in the area. Locals said the condition of the road is so poor that vehicles must move extremely carefully to avoid accidents.

"One of my hands was broken last Saturday while walking along the road. I slipped while trying to give way to a rickshaw van," said Mohammad Sohel, a local resident.

According to Mohammad Sentu Miah, another local, the road has been in a severe state of disrepair for the last three years due to the city corporation's negligence.

"The drainage lines are completely blocked because the authorities have failed to clean them. Sewage overflows from the drains, and residents have to wade through it every day," he said.

"The situation worsens during the rainy season when the road is submerged under knee-deep water."

Residents said they often suffer from skin diseases caused by prolonged exposure to the dirty water.

Fifty-year-old Shahzadi, a resident of the area, said, "Our tenants do not stay for more than two or three months because of this terrible situation. We have to face

dirty water right outside our doors -- it has become a permanent problem."

Kohinoor Begum, 40, who supplies homemade lunch boxes to factory workers, said, "It's very risky to walk here with the food boxes -- there's always a chance of falling into the dirty water due to the road's condition."

Kohinoor added that about a month ago, a woman fell into an open manhole hidden under the dirty water. Locals put a wooden cover on it to prevent any further accidents.

A nurse from Dhaka Medical College Hospital shared a similar experience. "I often have to wade through this water to reach the hospital after rain, as it's nearly impossible to find a rickshaw here after the rain," she said, requesting anonymity.

Sadia Akter, a ninth-grade student of Agrani Girls School and College, said, "After the rain, the dirty water rises, and we are forced to wade through it. Many times, I have reached school with my clothes completely wet."

Contacted, Dhaka South City Corporation Chief Engineer Nur Azizur Rahman said a contractor has already been appointed to repair the road.

"However, the contractor is working very slowly. I have asked the concerned officials to serve a notice, and we'll hold a meeting on Monday to find an immediate solution."



Motorcyclists and pedestrians struggle through the dirty water on Mazed Sardar Road in Old Dhaka, which remains waterlogged almost year-round due to poor drainage and lack of maintenance. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

## Karwan Bazar's Mughal-era mosque echoes Dhaka's rich past

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Nestled within the chaos of Karwan Bazar, one of Dhaka's oldest and busiest commercial hubs, stands the Khawaja Am Barsha Jame Mosque, a relic of Mughal splendour that has quietly endured the city's rapid transformation.

The three-domed mosque, built on a raised platform about 12 feet above the ground, is believed to have been constructed during the reign of Subedar Shaista Khan by his close aide, Khawaja Am Barsha, in the latter half of the 17th century.

The intricate Mughal craftsmanship of the mosque, from its domes and arches to its sturdy octagonal corner towers, still draws admiration from those who step inside. Each of the mosque's four corners features a towering minaret-like structure capped with miniature domes, and access to the main prayer hall is through a flight of stairs on the eastern side.

When this correspondent visited the site recently, Mufti Tayeb Ahmed, a teacher at the adjoining madrasa, shared his experience of serving there for several years. Inside the main prayer hall, a stone inscription bearing a verse from the Holy Quran can be seen above the mihrab. Another inscription, positioned above the mosque's central entrance, bears the name of Shaista Khan and mentions the construction period.

"The script is in old Persian, and parts of it have faded over time," said Tayeb. "Only a few lines are legible now -- Shaista Khan's name can be read clearly on the second line."

He said the mosque is believed to have been constructed between 1664 and 1668, during Shaista Khan's first tenure as Subedar of Bengal. The structure itself is remarkably solid, with thick walls and domes that have withstood centuries of weathering.

Over the years, the mosque has undergone several renovations. The current five-storey

complex behind the original prayer hall features modern additions, including marble flooring, mosaic pillars, air-conditioned rooms and decorative lighting. Beneath the three-domed mosque lies a basement that once served multiple purposes -- as a storeroom, sleeping quarters and even a cooking space for madrasa students.

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Local traders said the mosque was built at a time when Karwan Bazar stood on the outskirts of old Dhaka, near the waterways of present-day Hatirjheel.

Travellers from distant regions would anchor their boats nearby and rest at the mosque before continuing their journey.

Over time, the settlement around

it evolved into one of the city's largest commercial markets.

Abdus Salam, a long-time trader who began his business beside the mosque in 1967, recalled seeing the tomb of Khawaja Am Barsha on the northern side, enclosed by walls. "There was also a well next to the mosque, built at the same time, from which worshippers performed ablution," he said.

He reminisced about the open prayer shed that once stood on the mosque's eastern side along Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue -- later demolished during the Ershad administration to create a garden area, which still remains.

As the market expanded in the 1990s and commercial high rises sprang up around Karwan Bazar, the number of worshippers increased sharply. To accommodate the growing congregation, the mosque committee initiated a multi-storey expansion project. The plan was later endorsed by then president HM Ershad, transforming the earlier market design into a five-storey mosque building.

On the southern side of the mosque, a seven-storey madrasa building now serves hundreds of students, while the ground floor hosts several small shops and a restaurant. According to madrasa authorities, these rental spaces help maintain the mosque and fund its educational activities.

Former madrasa student Shahidul Islam said the mosque's capacity has grown immensely over the years. "Now, more than 4,000 worshippers can pray here at once," he said with pride.

Although the modern extension now towers above the original Mughal structure, the three-domed section still retains its historical essence -- its terracotta ornamentation, arched entrances and ancient inscriptions standing as witnesses to Dhaka's rich past.

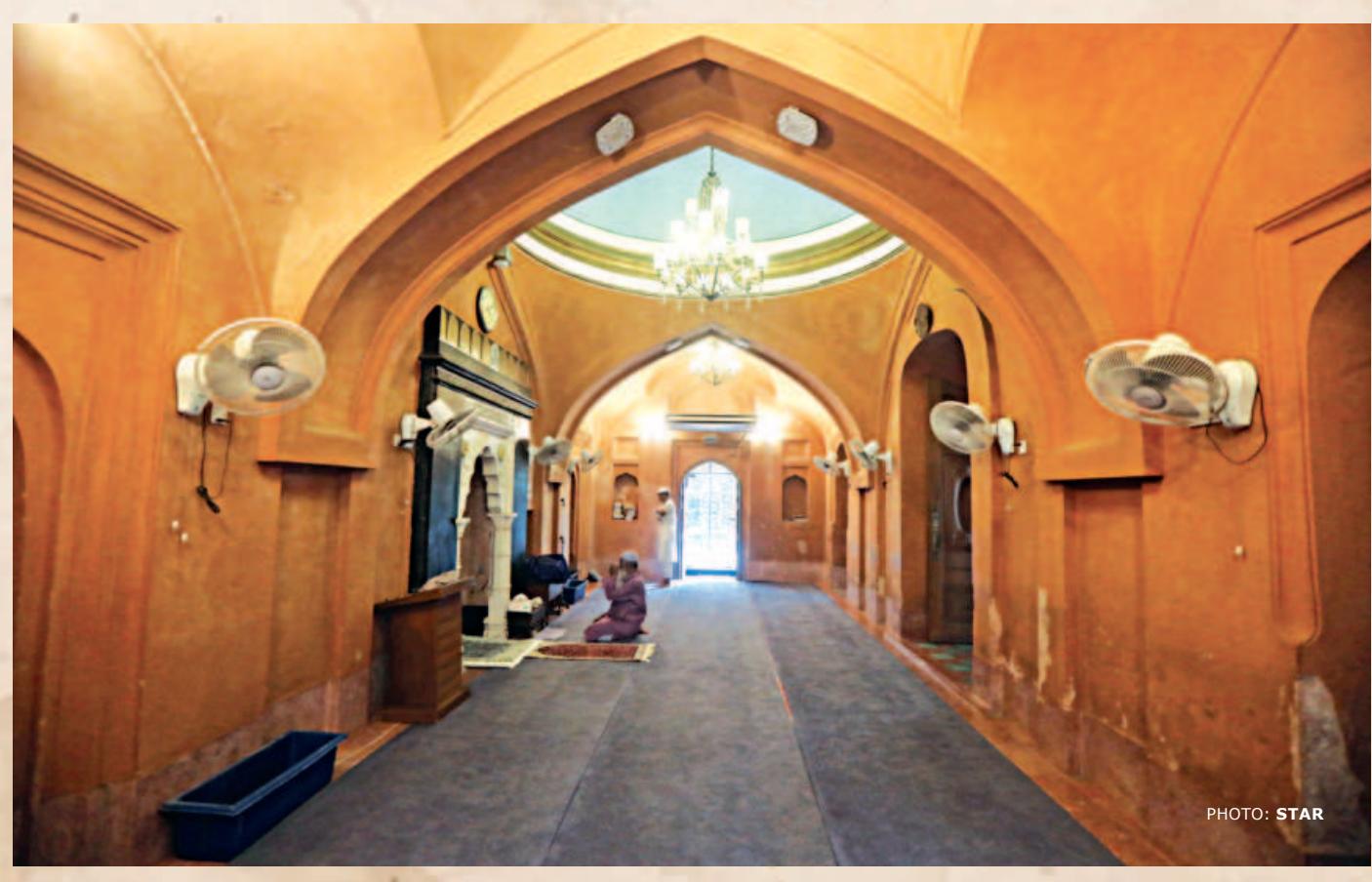


PHOTO: STAR

3,000 AL men held in 10 months over flash processions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has arrested nearly 3,000 leaders and activists of the Awami League (AL) and its affiliated organisations over the past ten months for participating in flash processions across the capital.

DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media and Public Relations) Talebur Rahman disclosed the information at a press conference at the DMP Media Centre on Minto Road yesterday.

The briefing followed the arrest of 46 AL leaders and activists from several flash processions held in different parts of Dhaka earlier in the day.

Talebur Rahman said those detained during flash processions were later formally arrested after verification. "Many of them come from outside Dhaka and join these processions in exchange for money," he said, adding that police are working to identify and take legal action against the financiers behind these activities.

He said such processions were aimed at creating public panic and asserting political presence in the capital.

40 extrajudicial killings in last 14 months Reports Odhikar; MSF raises concern over rise in custodial deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 40 people were victims of extrajudicial killings during the 14 months of the interim government formed after the July uprising, according to rights organisation Odhikar.

The highest number of such incidents -- nine -- occurred in September last year, while 11 were reported in the past three months, said the organisation in its latest quarterly report published on its website yesterday.

The report summarised data covering the entire 14 month period, based on information from Odhikar's human rights defenders and various media outlets.

- 153 people killed in mob violence
- 7,979 incidents of political violence, killing 281 people
- 242 attacks on journalists

Odhikar began counting from August 9, 2024 -- four days after the fall of the Awami League government following the July uprising.

No extrajudicial killings were recorded between August 9 and the end of that month. Nine incidents were reported in September 2024, followed by one each in October, November, and December.

Five people were killed in January this year, three in February, and two each in March and April. The figures for May to September 2025 were four, three, six, three, and two, respectively.

Among the 40 victims, 19 were shot dead, 14 died from torture, and seven were beaten to death.

Between July and September this year, 11 people were reportedly killed in such incidents. During the same period, 153 people were killed in mob violence, the report said. The highest number -- 18 -- occurred in September this year, compared

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Oct logs highest dengue toll of year

80 deaths, 22,014 cases reported

HELEMUL ALAM

With the continuous rise in dengue-related deaths and infections, the country recorded 80 deaths and 22,520 cases in October alone -- the highest in any month this year -- highlighting an alarming trend.

According to experts, both dengue cases and deaths may show a slight downward trend from November as temperatures begin to drop. However, the decline is expected to be minimal.

Data from the Directorate General of Health Services shows that in October 2024, there were 134 dengue-related deaths and 30,879 cases, compared to 173 deaths and 29,652 cases in November.

The DGHS further reported that a total of 278 dengue patients had died and 69,862 were hospitalised this year, as of yesterday morning.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said a slight downward trend is currently being observed.

"Naturally, this rate is expected to decrease further, as the cyclone and adverse weather conditions that were anticipated



### KEY ISSUES

- Experts warn decline in cases may be minimal
- Culex threat rises as Aedes still active
- Mosquito breeding continues despite cooler weather
- Health experts fear prolonged outbreak

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote regular cleanup drives
- Strengthen local govt involvement
- Implement targeted hotspot management
- Launch community awareness campaigns

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3