

# Exceedin

Traffic jams  
are a regular  
feature in many  
parts of North  
Lahore but  
nobody seems  
to address the  
issue

*Lahore  
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**By Asim Mateen**



## **encroachment**

**T**he increasing encroachments in the city on footpaths with piles of filth lying around, the alarming

pollution level, and haphazard noisy traffic are common features, especially in the less developed northern area of Lahore.

Most of the development work in the city is restricted to posh areas and the condition of the less developed areas has become worse with time. Realising this, many residents of these areas have

shifted to better localities. These areas are already quite congested and lack open spaces and footpaths. Now one can hardly see any footpath which has been spared by the encroachers. As a consequence, pedestrians are forced to walk on the main road, which is hazardous. This causes the traffic on busy main roads to slow

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The main crossing near the shrine called 'Ghoray Shah Chowk' is a passage to all the vehicular and pedestrian traffic moving to and from northern Lahore to the other parts of the city. Secondly, the shrine after which the area is named is located at the chowk due to which the crossing is always flooded with vehicles of the devotees visiting the Darbar. This adds to the congestion in the area. Certain influen-



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tial people have encroached upon the footpaths and major portion of the road in front of Akbari Mosque.

People living there are fed up with the situation. "Everything was fine until eight years back when a few people sought permission to sell items on the footpath outside the mosque. They were permitted to do so by the mosque committee on condition that they would not obstruct the way of those coming to say prayers. But after some time they usurped the land and encroached upon the whole footpath and upto 10 feet of the 35 feet wide main road," said Malik Naseer Ahmad, a known social worker in the area.

Presently, the situation is that there are five full-fledged shops and public toilets next to the outer wall of

When passersby do not find footpath space they start walking on the road which creates traffic disturbance. It also becomes almost impossible to offer prayers at this time. Traffic blockade for hours is a routine at this crossing, making it impossible to commute in a hurry or in an emergency.

"At times the situation is so bad that a couple of patients even died on the way as it was the only conduit to take them to the hospital," said Deputy Nazim (Naib Nazim) Razaul Karim Butt. He added, "the government funds are allocated as per party affiliation and that is why this area is paying heavily for its loyalty to the previous government. A reaction to this negligence has been evident from the election results in the area.

Another resident Nawazich

but all in vain. Last appeal was made to District Nazim Mian Amir, who visited the area on September 21 to canvass for PML-Q candidates and promised to take action after elections. But nothing has happened yet. "I am sure District Nazim Mian Amir will not spare Lahorites for rejecting PML-Q candidates and our problems will multiply in the years to come," he added.

When Town Municipal Officer (TMO) of Ravi Town, Ahmad Ali Kamboh was contacted in this respect, he said that he had taken charge a few days back and was not aware of the issue. Though he said that he would visit the area soon and see that encroachments are removed as soon as possible.

Now the elections are over, let's hope that the wor-





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Presently, the situation is that there are five full-fledged shops and public toilets next to the outer wall of the mosque, which is quite inappropriate. The mosque committee repeatedly requested these encroachers to leave but they refused.

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Another resident Nawazish Chaudhry, a known businessman in the locality said, the affectees of Ghoray Shah had filed several complaints with the district administration

but all in vain. Last appeal was made to District Nazim Mian Amir, who visited the area on September 21 to canvass for PML-Q candidates and promised to take action after elections. But nothing has happened yet. "I am sure District Nazim Mian Amir will not spare Lahorites for rejecting PML-Q candidates and our problems will multiply in the years to come," he added.

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Now the elections are over, let's hope that the worthy TMO also gets time to visit the unfortunate community and take appropriate action before another life is lost in an ambulance due to traffic blockade.