

Underground tanks and reservoirs turning into death traps

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Cleaning water reservoir tanks and septic tanks has become a risk leading to death for the city's unfortunate manual labourers. Even newly built water reservoirs are not beyond risk as was seen recently when three people died at Moddhopara, in Uttara, within a newly constructed underground water tank.

According to locals and neighbours, the man who first entered the reservoir was a mason and was in charge of the construction of the tank. He stepped into the reservoir to dismantle the scaffolding used during construction. As soon as he stepped in he could barely shout for help before he passed out unconscious.

The second man who was waiting outside the tank stepped down immediately and succumbed to the same fate. Then the third person, a van driver, who tried in vain to save the mason and his helper, also tragically died after stepping down into the tank.

The only person to survive was the last to step into the tank, in order to save the first three men. He came out shouting that he was suffering from a burning sensation on his skin.

"It is reported that workers who

step into water tanks, septic tanks and man holes often come out with a burning sensation. This happens due to the lack of oxygen in the underground space and the formation of gases like methane, nitrogen gases, chlorine, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. These form acidic compounds when they dissolve in moisture in the air, and then cause burning on contact with skin. Instant death occurs due to the presence of poisonous carbon monoxide," said Samsul Alam, the superintendent engineer of Dhaka WASA.

The under construction water tank was built two months ago and then kept sealed for two months. The mason climbed down immediately after opening the wooden cover of the reservoir for the first time in months.

The water of the reservoir was black, as witnessed by this Star City correspondent. An acrid smell was still being emitted from the tank four days after the incident.

"Gases like methane and carbon monoxide could be formed in the water tank from stagnant water and organic contamination like a dead mice or leakage of sewage. However, this could not be confirmed without tests," said the superintendent engineer.

"Leakages in the WASA water pipe line and sewage line are a cause of methane and other

poisonous gases being present in underground water tanks," said a civil engineer of the department of public health and engineering.

"To ensure safety from such disasters, it is always necessary to take safety measures before entering any such tanks or reservoirs."

The safety measure is as simple as dropping a lighted matchstick within the tank. If it creates a flame in the reservoir the presence of poisonous gases is confirmed.

"The cover of the reservoirs should be kept open at least for some hours to allow for the gases to escape," said the civil engineer.

The ignorance of workers, regarding such a simple safety measure, is claiming lives. This could easily be avoided by educating manual workers about this easy and effective safety 'match test.'

"It is always recommended to finish work in underground tanks, reservoirs and man holes before day time, as gas generation increases during the day time due to the temperature increase. People should built ventilation pipes within such water tanks, as the poisonous gasses generated are lighter than the air", said Samsul Alam.



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Truck stand move to reduce city jams



Tejgaon Truck Stand is one of the city's major truck stands that are a major cause of traffic congestion, and need to be relocated to a more convenient site.

SOHEL ISLAM

As major truck stands across the city continue to create needless traffic congestion, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) last Thursday proposed relocating them to more convenient sites.

This proposal came in response to the resolutions adopted in the meeting titled 'Good Governance and Beautification of Dhaka City' held at the Prime Minister's office last month, with Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui in the chair.

"Initially we decided to relocate Tejgaon Truck Station to the open space close to Tejgaon Railway Station. But the PM's office decided last month to turn this open space as well as the truck stand's area into two playground-cum-parks and asked us to come up with another alternative," said a senior official of the DMP.

"Now we are proposing its relocation to the southern wetland of the Pragati Sarani crossing which joins the Airport Road. Bangladesh Railway owns the land, which could be a very good alternative for Tejgaon Truck Stand," said the senior official.

Gabtoli Truck Stand had already been shifted to Amin Bazar a few years back.

"However, many of the drivers still park their trucks at Gabtoli. We will begin strictly enforcing them to stop parking at Gabtoli and make them park at Amin Bazar," added the official.

The alternative for Mohammapur Truck Stand has been proposed at the western side of the Dhaka protection embankment, which stretches from Gabtoli to Sadarghat. The place, which is owned by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), is currently being prepared for the trucks.

"Once the trucks have been shifted, we will extend Mohammapur Bus Stand up to the current truck stand. At present many buses and other 'human-haulers' stop on the road owing to lack of space at the bus stand, creating serious traffic congestion during the day," said the DMP official.

"We have also proposed shifting both the Doyaganj and Syedabad Truck Stands to a place 200 metres from the Narayanganj link road. But the proposed area is privately owned, so we will first need to acquire the land," said the official.

Two suggestions have been put forward for both the Dholakhal and Faridabad Truck Stands. The first option is a privately owned site one kilometre from the Buriganga bridge. The other choice is at Nazirabad road, which is also private land.

At present, truck stands in the city not only contribute majorly to traffic congestion but also detract greatly from the beauty of the city. Over the past decade much discussion has taken place about the relocation of these truck stands, but so far little has been done.

One-Stop Cell to spell less road-dig chaos?

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will come up with 'road digging guidelines' to put an end to the chaos caused by unplanned digging in the city.

"We are planning to make the guidelines public in a massive way so everyone can come to know about it," Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka told Star City.

The chaos of uncoordinated road-digging is widely blamed on utility service providers of the city, such as the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB), Titas Gas and Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA).

The Mayor had asked RAJUK Chairman Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury to prepare a draft of the guidelines, which has already been submitted to the DCC. After the Prime Minister's approval, the draft will be implemented by the end of this month.

Following the guidelines, a 'One-Stop Cell' headed by the Chief Executive of the DCC will approve and supervise all the road digging in the city. The cell also includes representatives from BTTB, DESA, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB), WASA and other service providers.

"Before any digging plans, one must inform the cell how many days a project will take to complete. No stipulated time for the completion of digging has been kept in the guidelines. It will be up to the cell's discretion within what period the work will have to be finished," said the RAJUK chairman.

"The guidelines have kept provisions for 'as built drawings' of all roads and 'as built utility service lines'. Only after geographical information surveys (GIS), will anyone be allowed to carry out diggings. Moreover, the contractors will not be allowed to keep debris and rubbish on the road or close to digging areas for more than a day," said Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury.

"Before the start of the works, utility service providers will have to submit trench plans, protection measures, name of the machines and above all workings plans. Removal plans (debris, earth and rubbish) and rehabilitation plans will need to be presented," said a senior official of RAJUK who helped prepare the guidelines.

"At present, the underground utility lines stretch through the middle of the road. We have proposed that these lines should be reinstalled at one side of the road, rather than further repairing or installing lines through the middle. If this can be done the movement of traffic will not be hampered in the future," said the official.

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OURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National
Asian courier Service Ltd- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 7100842-4
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975

Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222
Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751

TIPS
Do not forget to bring your raincoat. and To avoid traffic jams, follow the traffic rules.

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday 3 pm - 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am - 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466
Open: 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday Closed
Sonargoan Jadughar

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulistan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoli	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahall
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biwa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan