

No solution to sewerage overflow in Gulshan

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The sewer leakage problem once confined to Gulshan 1, has now spread to alleys and by lanes in the Gulshan area, with the Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) failing to go ahead with the mass cleaning drive expected after Eid-UI-Azha.

Since the sewer lines were not cleaned on a regular basis, the waste kept on piling up and at point started to seep out through the manhole covers.

Residents of Gulshan said the stench caused by continuous sewerage water overflow in different alleys between Gulshan 1 and 2 and along Tejgaon Link Road has become unbearable.

Those living around Azad Mosque, the largest in Gulshan complained that the problem persists mainly on roads 39 and 44.

Another resident living opposite the south entrance to the mosque said that the raw sewage has been pumped out and shovelled on the open road and in one instance piled alongside the wall of the mosque.

Others complained that the sewage spreads bad odour.

Aminul Islam of Road 47 said the drains clogged on the road are excellent breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The roads continue to be wet



STAR PHOTO

with puddles of stagnant water, making it impossible for anyone to take a stroll along the streets.

The situation of the alleys around the Wonderland Park is no different.

Last week the stench caused by the over flow of sewage water on road 113 (the alley opposite the Agora departmental store), road 116, a certain point between Standard Chartered Bank and Bank Asia along Gulshan Avenue and a few other points between

Gulshan 1 and 2 was unbearable.

Meanwhile, the water leakage and overflow from the manholes in Gulshan 1 that has become the most common problem, is yet to be addressed.

Ahmed Rubel, a restaurateur from Gulshan 1 said: "When we complain some action is taken, but within a week the problem is back at square one."

The leakage at points on road 135 and a point in front of the Dhaka Bank are a never-ending

story, residents allege.

The overflowing sewer water also causes traffic congestion at the Gulshan 1 intersection as vehicles move very slowly during rush hours so that the dirty water does not splash on pedestrians, said another resident.

But the case is different at night. Passing vehicles have no sympathy towards pedestrians as the speed over the dirty water.

A high official of Wasa zone 5 that takes care of the Gulshan

drainage said, when contacted, the drainage system is to be blamed.

A sewerage system when built has to be able to hold on for 20 years taking into consideration the increasing population and buildings, he said.

"The Gulshan sewerage system was built in 1975 and no major renovation took place except occasional cleaning and building of extension pipes in the alleys," said the official.

A Wasa engineer said sewers are of two types – strong and sanitary. The sewer lines that are clogged by strong household and wastes from other chores like polythene, plastic and material that do not dissolve in water. Thus the pressure is on the sanitary sewer already cumbered with a high density of passing human faeces.

The main sewer line from Gulshan 1 to 2 has a diameter of 18 inches but the pipes along the alleys are only of eight inches, said the Wasa engineer.

Pipelines of these diameters were installed in 1975 to cater for the single or two-storied building at that time, and problems began as no provision had been made to carry the wastes of the present multi-storied buildings in the area.

Little progress in saving

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Muzaffer Ahmad said nothing tangible has been done yet to restore the flow of Buriganga and save it from pollution, though a huge amount of money is spent in different projects.

"There is no evidence of quality work because of corruption," he said about the implementation of the project. "The job of saving Buriganga is not carried out properly, as the local influential people have their personal interests in it," said Prof Ahmad who is also the chief of Transparency International Bangladesh.

Though BIWTA knocked down some 2,300 illegal concrete and semi-concrete structures that encroached the river during 2001 and 2005, it failed to remove some 20 religious establishments built on the riverbank, according to BIWTA.

The 11-member taskforce formed in 2002 on the protection of Buriganga recommended that the mosques and madrasas built illegally encroaching on the riverbank would be removed with the help of local lawmakers.

Lawmakers have been informed about the issue but no progress is seen so far.

"It will not be possible to remove encroached religious establishments built encroaching on the river, as the local MPs are unlikely to come forward to resolve the problem fearing it might hurt people's religious sentiment," said a highly-placed source at the BIWTA.

"I will look into the progress in the removal of the religious establishments from the river foreshore," said the BIWTA chairman, who is the member secretary of the committee for implementation of the taskforce recommendations.

The taskforce in its final recommendations asked the authorities to determine the

river area as per CS record of 1912, excavate the riverbed, build walkway along the banks and plant trees, said Prof Ahmad, a member of the taskforce.

The taskforce recommendations also include removal of kitchen markets from the riverbanks. The road-embankment from Postagola to Gabtoli could not be completed due to a kitchen market on the Shyambazar part of Buckland embankment.

"We have undertaken a project to prevent any further encroachment on the river," said the Secretary of BIWTA Syed Monowar Hussain.

The project, waiting for approval from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec), has components on building walkway, protection wall, harbour for idle ships and recreation centre on the riverbanks, said the BIWTA chairman.

"The 38.82 crore Development Project Proposal (DPP) is likely to be passed in the next Ecneec meeting," he said. "Then we will go for further development work."

"At present there is almost no concrete establishments encroaching on the river," said Hussain. "But most of the reclaimed land of the river banks has still been vacant without any public service installations, beautification or plantation."

According to the BIWTA records, a total of 309 illegal structures still occupy different spots of the Buriganga foreshore and shores. It reclaimed 166.42 acres of foreshore land in the process of eviction drives. Total area of foreshore land is 712.88 acres at present. Illegal establishments still occupy 95 acres of foreshore land.

Member Secretary of Buriganga Bachao Andolon Mihir Biswas, who carries out a monthly monitoring of the river,

said: "Fresh encroachments are taking place with makeshift bamboo structures in Kamrangirchar, Atirkhal and Rayerbazar areas."

"The job of restoring navigability of Buriganga, reclaiming its foreshore, shore and channel and determining its original area is in a total mess," said another source.

The authorities are now claiming river land in Jhawchar village where the villagers hold ownership records obtained from land office more than 50 years ago.

As per the government decision in this regard, river foreshore has to be reclaimed according to the original CS record, said Monowar Hussain. "Ownership of river area by any person or organisation will be cancelled if obtained after the CS record of 1912."

Shortage

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though the fourth floor has not been completed. The original foundation was laid for six-stories, but lack of funds has held back the completion of the entire building.

Dean of Arts Faculty Prof Sadrul Amin admitted that the arts faculty is hard hit by the lack of classrooms.

He said that plans are underway to put up another building between the Madhur Canteen and the mosque and complete the fourth floor of the present building soon.

"We need time to implement these plans," he said. "To overcome the crisis at present, I am requesting teachers to take afternoon lessons when most of the classrooms are empty," added the dean. "But the teachers are not willing to compromise," he said.

He said that students could alternate classes between the mornings and afternoons with a few at noon. This would facilitate both teachers and students, he added.

12x3

12x2

10x3