



SK ENAMUL HAQ

Waterlogging to hit a new high this monsoon

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Waterlogging will hit a new high in Dhaka this monsoon, as box culverts and sewers of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) have remained unclean, urban experts warned.

"Up to 60 percent of the culverts are jammed and canals have ended up in grabbers' hands. The capital may face waterlogging as before," Wasa Managing Director ANH Akther Hossain said. "We are worried and don't know how we can tackle it."

The Wasa drainage system has eight-kilometre long box culvert and 225-kilometre storm sewer built to carry away excess water from roads during heavy rain. The capital has also 65-kilometre open canal to flush out rainwater.

The authorities will also select cleaners through bidding to clean the box culverts. "We have floated tenders to clean Segunbagicha culvert," he said adding: "I went there last week and found the culvert in a bad condition."

"The culvert was jammed with waste, as it was not

cleaned regularly," said another Wasa official, seeking anonymity.

The culvert built on Segunbagicha canal stretches 2.1 kilometres from Fakirpool through Arambagh and Motijheel to Kamalapur to Maniknagar. A sluice gate was built in Maniknagar to drain water off to the Jirani canal.

Coconut peelings, cans and throwaway plastic bottles block the water flow through the box culverts. "You cannot see through the culverts, as they are clogged with waste. We could not clean them because of fund

shortage," the Wasa managing director said.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has about 2,200-kilometre long surface drain that carries sewage water into the storm sewers.

Hossain said authorities planned a drive to clean storm sewers before rain. Heavy rain inundates the roads in Rampura, Malibagh, Moghbazar, Shantinagar and Mirpur. Wasa officials claimed that storm sewers in the areas were cleaned last year while local people called it eyewash. "Wasa men clean the lines

but they get jammed again after a week," said Ataul Karim, a resident of Segunbagicha.

A new pipeline was installed at Mirpur 10 last year, but it could not be extended up to Kalshi canal because of fund shortage.

"If the plan had been complete, there would not have been waterlogging at the Mirpur 10 roundabout," a Wasa engineer said.

"To clean storm sewers and box culverts, we need Tk 3.5 crore, but the government allocated Tk 1.6 crore. With this budget, we will try to clean the

city drains to minimise waterlogging," the Wasa managing director said.

Rainwater cannot flow out of the city as grabbers filled up the canals in Khilgaon, Rayerbazar and Kalyanpur and most lowlands in and around the city.

Wasa has mapped the canals and asked the government to take action against grabbers. Experts suggest Wasa, DCC, Local Government Engineering Department and police make an orchestrated effort to free the canals from encroachment.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.



"They want to remove an elected government by means of arms."

-- Khaleda Zia
Prime Minister
Tells Chittagong rally pointing to opposition Awami League, on April 19.
Source: Prothom Alo

"Arrests, torture cannot stop fall of this government."

-- Sheikh Hasina
Leader of the Opposition and AL president
Tells rally at Savar warning against mindless arrests, allegedly to stave off opposition programmes, on April 23.
Source: Prothom Alo



"Should Ziaur Rahman have heard this, he would say naujubillah..."

-- Dr. Kamal Hossain
President, Gano Forum
Replies to a query of an expatriate Bangladeshi on the Internet on the issue of proclamation of independence, on April 18. Source: Prothom Alo

"When people will go for a cricket match, this government will be defeated by an innings."

-- Aktheruzzaman
AL Organising Secretary
Tells Kaliganj rally commenting on the cricket played by the two sons of the prime minister on the day of Hawa Bhaban siege, on April 22.
Source: Prothom Alo



"The opinion of the current world is against power capture by the armed forces."

-- H M Ershad
Deposed president and Chairman, Jatiya Party
Tells press after returning from a visit to the People's Republic of China, on April 19. Source: Prothom Alo

"Even the developed countries cannot distribute relief at this speed."

-- Ali Ahsan Md. Mujahid
Social Welfare Minister
Tells Prothom Alo, defending the delay in relief distribution in the tornado ravaged Netrokona, on April 17

SUMMER FRUITS DEAR

Delicious summer fruits have started arriving at the city markets but prices are exorbitant. (Story on page 18)



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN