



Serious waterlogging disrupted traffic at the Dainik Bangla intersection following Friday's down-pour.

SK ENAMUL HAQ

# Waterlogging to hit a new high this monsoon

MIZANUR KHAN

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 Akhter 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 flash 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 Fakirerpool 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 low-lands 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.

# Substandard CNG conversion stations mushrooming

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Lax government monitoring has given rise to substandard CNG conversion stations in Dhaka.

Rupantorita Praktit Gas Limited (RPGL) invited applications from interested companies in a bid to cope with the demand for CNG (compressed natural gas) conversion and issued permits to those with

high technical capacity.

"We will provide as many permits as possible to companies with technical capability. But we were not sure who will come forward to start business as it needs high technical and financial capacity," said a RPGL official, seeking unanimity.

Although the RPGL has the provision to issue permission for CNG conversion stations, the land ministry controls the allocation of plots for the sta-

tions. Taking advantage of the situation, some companies applied for conversion stations only to get hold of land.

"Many companies who got land did not start their business," the official said.

Dhaka has 15 conversion stations, mainly concentrated in Mohakhali, Tejgaon and Moghbazar and Chittagong has only one.

But the RPGL does not control the quality of conversion stations, which led to the

rise of low-quality conversion outlets.

CNG conversion costs about Tk 32,500 a 60-litre cylinder and Tk 43,000 a 90-litre cylinder in a process that saves about 80 percent of energy.

Over 20,000 motor vehicles have been made CNG-enabled and demand is soaring, as the cost of CNG is five times lower than petrol or octane.

Because of faulty installation and substandard conver-

sion kits, drivers need to go to the stations time and again for fine-tuning their vehicles, which costs both money and time.

"The flawed fitting of a cylinder heats up the engine. Vehicles cannot easily accelerate if kits are of low quality," said an engineer of Navana that deals in cars.

The stations use Italian conversion kits -- most of them of low-performance. The prices of the kits also vary

according to quality.

"The higher the prices are, the better the quality," a RPGL engineer said. "CNG conversion needs proper inspection and gas station workers need training."

A source said all vehicles used by governmental and semi-governmental offices would be made CNG-enabled by December, but the drivers are against conversion as they can pocket money through fuel pilferage.

## 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

Replying 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."

-- Akhteruzzaman

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 ProthomAlo, 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