

# Clogged drains, rain-reeling city

If rubbish is constantly cleared off streets, catch pits will be open for easy flow of rainwater, clearing way for vehicles and pedestrians

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The capital came to a virtual standstill last Wednesday, when hundreds of vehicles got stuck in up to three feet of water as nearly 51mm of rain pelted down in just two hours.

Sources in the Drainage circle of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) said waterlogging on a massive scale is the result of the clogging of many drains and other outlets with rubbish littered all around and rapidly disappearing canals.

According to a Wasa drainage expert the entire 260-kilometre network of storm sewers in the city is in real danger due to mindless dumping of rubbish and neglect by cleaners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

Wasa recently requested the government to act to save the existing canals from further encroachment. Failure to do so, authorities fear, will paralyse the city for days in the future.



Man and machine wading through waterlogged roads are commonplace these days.

Realising the danger it faces, the government in a rare move has sanctioned Tk 1.6 crore to clean up the age-old drainage system. But Wasa sources said they need funds round the year to keep waterlogging at bay.

The expert also said that although Wednesday's waterlogging did not last long, the situation may not remain the same during floods.

"As soon as water levels in the rivers around the city rise we should shut down all the sluice gates on the flood protection embankment," he added.

"With the sluice gates closed, the water inside the city areas will take much longer to clear. The major problem is the amount of solid rubbish dumped inside the storm sew-

ers," he said. Whenever the DCC street cleaners sweep the streets, they dump all the rubbish into the drains through the 'catch pits'. In the process the catch pits get blocked and the rainwater has no opening to flow into the drains.

"When we recently cleaned a drain in the old part of the city we found tonnes of discarded plastic, rubber,

bottles; even mattresses and pillows," a Wasa official said.

Wasa now fears that it will not be long before water-logging becomes a permanent feature of city life in much the same way all low lying areas are affected after a brief shower.

# When life turns into a nightmare



## Memories of the only son's brutal murder still haunt his parents

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

It is more than the worst nightmare. It never came to mind that the parents' most precious of all -- Arian -- could be taken away from them.

"I cannot imagine anyone killing a child," sobbed Selim Sarker, a receptionist of Monwara Hospital in Ramna. Selim's 16-month-old son Sadman Sadiq Sarker nicknamed Arian was found dead in a trunk in their Nayatola home in Dhaka on June 16. Selim shudders at the thought of the dreadful morning.

Arian and his father were in sleep when the boy's mother Kamrunnahar Lipi went shopping at 9:30am. "She left home latching the door from outside," Selim said adding the main gate of the building remains under

lock round the clock.

"I woke up to loud rings on the doorbell shortly before 10:00am but found no-one downstairs," Selim said. He then went to the bathroom and returned within three minutes only to find the door open and Arian missing. "I did not find Arian in bed but I wasn't worried at the time. I thought my wife came back from shopping and took Arian with her," Selim said.

Worries grew stronger only after Lipi came back from the market and went looking for the child in the neighbourhood. "We could not think our son was dead. We thought he was picked up for ransom or traffickers took him away," Selim said. They informed the police after a hectic search.

At about 1:30pm, Selim got a phone call that a little boy was found near Moghbazar Wireless Gate. He rushed

there along with the police only to find the call was a hoax.

By the time they came back home, the body of the child was retrieved from the trunk in the attic with head and shoulder injuries and legs and eyes bloodstained.

"What harm did a kid do to the killers? Didn't they become soft watching his innocent face?" Selim broke down in tears. "Arian had just learned to call me bappi (father). I will never hear him calling me again."

It was unendurable for Arian's mother, who was shocked to the core at her son's death. A postgraduate student of Titumir College, Lipi was to sit for the final exams this year. "She is not in a state to speak," Selim said, adding Lipi is not having food properly.

Wadud Sarker, Selim's elder brother, said the inci-

dent was mysterious. "I wonder what motive prompted the killing when Selim or his wife never had any dispute or rivalry with anyone," he said.

Selim and his relatives and friends said it was impossible for an outsider to commit the crime alone. "Anyone from the building must be involved in it," Selim alleged.

The police picked up Mariam, a home help of a third-floor tenant, on Thursday for interrogation.

Arian's parents left their subtle room on the second floor of the house at 290 Nayatola after their son died. "Grisly memories would have haunted us more if we had stayed there," Selim said. They are staying with relatives only to find solace.

"No-one can compensate for what I lost," Selim said, adding he only wants to see the criminals punished.

## 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.

"Who is the prime minister -- Bangla Bhai or Khaleda Zia?"

-- Sheikh Hasina

Leader of the Opposition Tells the House on June 15, indicating the rise of an Islamist outfit blamed for a series of killings in vigilante action.

Source: The Daily Star



"Awami League supporters also need someone to vote for. Sheikh Hasina assured that they will vote for us."

-- Mahi B Chowdhury

MP, Bikalpa Dhara Says on June 19 on whether his party got AL's support in Dhaka-10 by-polls.

Source: Janakantha



"The statement made by Salaudinn Quader Chowdhury was completely his personal opinion which has nothing to do with the government or the state's stand in this regard."

-- Morshed Khan

Foreign Minister Tells a press conference on June 19, disowning Salaudinn's remarks on the OIC election. Source: The Daily Star

"The activities of five people cannot be called a split in the party. They have violated the constitution of the party."

-- Rashed Khan Menon

Workers Party President Says on June 17, denying the apparent rift that came as five 'rebel' party leaders ran into a conflict with the party leadership on its decision to join Awami League's antigovernment movement.

Source: The Daily Star



"The country that won is the only OIC member to have diplomatic relations with Israel when Palestinians are being killed like flies. It is a member of Nato but is yet to sign the charter of OIC."

-- Salaudinn Quader Chowdhury

BNP lawmaker Says on June 18, describing his defeat in the OIC election as a victory of Israeli-American interests.

Source: The Daily Star

## BALDHA'S SEASONAL BLOOM



Baldha Garden is the manifestation of the dream and efforts of an extraordinary nature lover, Zamindar Narendranarayan Roy Chowdhury, who collected different types of rare plants, seeds and trees from around the world from 1909 to 1940. Ulotichandal, a flower seen only during the monsoon, the water lily in bloom and the leaves of amazon lily large as life, add colour to the gardens this time of the year.