

Open box culverts: Virtual death traps

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Open box culverts have become virtual death traps for city dwellers, as Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) removed concrete slabs from the sewage outlets for dredging.

The tragic death of two brothers who drowned in one such sewerage drain last week in Arambagh pushed the matter into the spotlight.

The heavy downpour triggered a strong flow of water around the openings into the culverts, threatening people's lives.

Although many were crippled or injured falling into the uncovered holes in the past, no action has been taken.

The covers of three box culverts in Arambagh, Green Road and Paribagh are lying open at 20 points putting the public life at risk. The holes, which are about eight to 10 feet deep, are large enough for a person to fall to their death or injury.

Besides, the waste that is collected from these culverts is piled up along the roads polluting surroundings with bad odour.

A cleaner on Green Road said the waste is cleared once in four days, but residents say the waste is hardly removed.

Wasa officials said they undertook the project to clean three culverts at a cost of Tk 2 crore, with 80 percent of the budget coming from a special allocation by the government and the rest of their own.

The culverts on the 1km Bijoynagar-Motijheel was opened at six points along the drain, at nine points at the Green Road-Russell Square intersection and at five points in Paribagh. These have been lying open for over a month.

"The slabs are heavy. It is not convenient to open and close them every day," said ANH Akhter Hossain, the managing director of Wasa. But residents allege the authorities have not taken precautionary measures to identify these dangerous holes.

"Only one or two bamboo poles with no indication of danger at most points are not sufficient to make people aware of such traps," said a resident of Arambagh, adding: "It becomes dangerous as the holes cannot

be spotted in the dark and many people get injured."

"We have decided to indicate such points as warning to pedestrians. If the decision is not carried out, we will take action against the staff responsible," said HDM Quamrul Alam Chowdhury, Wasa's superintendent engineer.

Apart from the removal of concrete slabs, most metal covers have been stolen as police and Wasa officials seem unconcerned about the matter.

City residents blamed accidents on the neglect of Wasa authorities, alleging these covers for these holes are not replaced in time.

Unofficial sources say the number of open manholes in the city is about 400.



An open culvert in Panthapath poses danger to the public.

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

FOOTBRIDGES TURN UNSAFE

Pedestrians on some overhead footbridges face the same difficulty as traffic on the main roads as the numbers using them are increasing.

Street vendors, fruit sellers, beggars, teasers and loafers use most overhead footbridges. They occupy half the space of these bridges and leave a narrow strip for public use.

The congestion of a mass of people compelled most city-dwellers to resort to the traditional but extremely risky procedure of crossing busy streets.

"Traffic policemen have asked me a number of times to use the overhead footbridge, but I still do not, fearing lurking pickpockets," said Moinul Islam, a passerby near the Farmgate footbridge.

Pickpockets steal money under cover of crowd on the overhead footbridges and people, especially women, tend to avoid the bridges.

These vendors, when caught, are fined Tk 500-Tk 1,000 as imposed by the court or sentenced to up to 30 days in jail. On the other hand, pickpockets are sentenced to imprisonment of two to four years.

"We try our best to apprehend such miscreants, but these criminals tend to drift off as we make our daily routine checks and return after we are done," said Sub-Inspector Golam Maula of Tejgaon Police station.

The city currently has 31 overhead footbridges and 10 more under construction by Dhaka Urban Transport Project.

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

DCC proposes surplus budget

SULTANA RAHMAN

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has planned a budget of Tk 922.01 crore for the 2004-2005 fiscal, which is a nearly 21 per cent rise from the previous financial year's budget of Tk 762.96 crore.

The DCC is expected to mobilise Tk 391.76 crore of the planned budget from its own resources. Tk 150 crore will be provided by the government while Tk 372.25 crore is likely to come from local and foreign projects.

"It will be a surplus budget," DCC mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka told the Daily Star. The DCC has projected an expenditure of Tk 914.01 crore against the targeted income of Tk 922.01 crore.

Tk 671.47 crore of the entire expenditure have been marked for development budget and the remaining Tk 207.54 crore was the revenue budget.

The revenue earning is estimated at Tk 391.01 crore, which is around Tk 153 crore more than the last fiscal. The corporation expects to earn from holding tax, trade license fees, advertisements, road digging fees, Bazar salami (complimentary fees), market rent, lighting taxes and some other 17 earning sectors. Sources informed that the DCC had failed to achieve its targeted revenue mark of Tk 305.82 crore last year.

DCC officials said that the corporation was planning to reassess the holding tax in the budget without increasing the

existing rates.

"Holding tax is fixed on the basis of house rent. Over the last decade, house rent has increased but the corporation has not made any reassessment," said the mayor while assuring that he was not going to increase the current tax.

The budget is expected to see an increased allocation of three crore Taka for mosquito control, surveillance and monitoring which received Tk 12 crore last year.

Particular emphasis has been given on special cleanliness drives. Tk 8 crore have been allocated for this in the budget. It was Tk 6 crore in 2003-04 fiscal while only Tk one crore was provided in 2002-03.

Income from issuance of trade license fees has been estimated at Tk 30 crore. The DCC last year earned Tk 20.50

crore from this sector.

Target earning from road digging fees has been shown at Tk 20 crore. Last year's return was only Tk 5 crore.

The DCC hopes to receive Tk 20 crore from advertisements, nearly double the amount of the Tk 9.62 crore earned during the last fiscal.

Maintenance and repair of roads, lanes and by-lanes received the highest allocation of Tk 103.65 crore. Last year it was Tk 72.50 crore.

Tk 27 crore was for debt payment. The DCC currently owes Tk 468.13 crore. It is indebted by Tk 219 crore to the government and Tk 50.51 crore to different banks alone.

The new budget has allocated Tk 2.50 crore for beautification of the capital. Tk 4.86 crore have been earmarked for development of environment.



The budget is expected to see an increased allocation of Tk 3 crore for mosquito control.

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

useful telephone numbers

COURIER 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
Bangladesh 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,
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
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

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- 9102125, 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

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No. Route

1 Gullistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12
2 Gullistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2
3 Gullistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gullistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gullistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-Gullistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtohi
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10 Sadarghat-Gullistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur
14 Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12
24 Gullistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile

Starts from

Golap Shah Mazar
Phoolbaria bus station
Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur
Sayedabad
Kamalapur
Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachattr
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ranimahall
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Syedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan