

# Water runs off, health risks stalk

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Floods have left several pockets inside the city stagnant with sewage, exposing thousands to health hazards.

Although water level in the rivers surrounding the capital is fast receding, stagnant water in these pockets show no signs of improvement. Some of the densely populated areas such as Kanthalbagan, Rayerbazar, Hazaribagh, Bashbari, Gopibagh and Gulshan are the worst affected, reeking of human excreta.

Along the Free School Street,

sewage has inundated the ground floors of many houses. Residents find the area is no longer fit for human habitation. Incidences of dengue fever and waterborne diseases are high and they blame leaky Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) pipelines for the outbreaks of typhoid and diarrhoea.

Officials of Wasa's Drainage Circle now blame unplanned urbanisation for water logging in the city.

They said the pumps set at Kalyanpur, Dholaikhal and Goranchandbari can pump out 53 cubic metres of water a sec-

ond, but these are unable to function fully as the canals and drainage system have been illegally occupied and blocked.

"Water from Rayerbazar can no longer travel to Kalyanpur due to encroachment along the canals and drains. Similar encroachments in other parts of the city are preventing water from running down to the retention points," said a Wasa engineer.

Water level in the Kanthalbagan storm sewerage has not receded and officials believe the system is clogged with rubbish.

"The Dhaka City Corpora-

tion's conservancy department could not clean rubbish for over a month because of the rise in water level. Residents of the inundated areas had to dump waste in the water, which may have stanchied the drainage system," said a Wasa expert.

Although Wasa and the Water Development Board have jointly set up about 100 small pumps in Rampura, Lalbagh and Maniknagar to remove the stagnant water over the embankment, the process has limited effects.



# Fare spike adds to flood woes

Before the floods, the rickshaw fare was Tk 6 to Tk 8 for two passengers on the same route, but now the fares depend on whether or not one wants to use the rickshaw.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Residents of Basabo, Madartek, Mugda and Banashri -- a few of the flood-affected areas -- are incurring extra expenditure because of fare hikes.

They are going through a tough time fight-

ing the price hike of essentials with the floods and extra-commuting fares add to their daily sufferings. Ferries are the only mode of transport in these areas during floods.

"There is no set fare and if the ferrymen realise that you are in a hurry to get across, they demand extra costs," said Fazlur

Rahman, a resident of Kadamtola in Basabo.

Some have used the flood situation a means of making a quick buck. Ferry business is at its best. Tamij Uddin, owner of a three-wheeler garage in Basabo, is one such person who initiated the new business.

"I bring in these small boats from

Munshiganj along with ferrymen, provide them with food and a home and they work under me," Tamij said.

The charge from Kadamtola to Binodini High School in Basabo is Tk 10 a person, but ferrymen make use of every opportunity and raise the fares during rush hours.

Before the floods, the rickshaw fare was Tk 6 to Tk 8 for two passengers on the same route, but now the fares depend on whether or not one wants to use the rickshaw.

"The fare from Malibagh to Moghbazar before the flood was Tk 10-12. But, we are charged more than Tk 20," said Khandoker Samiul Hassan, a BUET student from Moghbazar.

Some rickshawpullers admitted taking extra fare. "My shelter was in Meradia before the floods. Being a victim myself, I have to charge extra to make ends meet. My house and furniture went under water. My family and I have taken refuge on the footpath," said Shawkat, a rickshaw-puller.

"When a rickshawpuller makes his way through the sewage mixed water, I pay some extra money on humanitarian grounds," said Sitar Parveen, an NGO worker and resident of Gulbagh.

Extra charges do not stop here. Seizing this opportunity are the taxi and three-wheeler drivers, who demand Tk 10-20 more than the metered rate.

"These drivers carry commuters to the flood-affected areas without meters," said engineer Harunur Rashid from Rampura.

"We are left with no alternative -- either we pay extra or be stranded with transport," Harun said.

The bus services have not increased fares because of the floods. They stood firm with the normal fares.

"We made no change in charges because it wasn't necessary to do so," said a ticket seller of Ababil Transport in Rampura.

Employees of other bus services such as Nirapad, Volvo, Shapla and Citybus said fares at various counters remained static.

# Snakebite patients on the rise after floods

BISHAWJIT DAS

Victims of snakebite are streaming in at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) from in and around the capital as anti-snake venom is not available in other hospitals.

Snakebite has been on the rise since floodwaters engulfed two-thirds of the country as the deadly reptiles found their way into houses and localities. But medical centres in many flood-hit areas have failed to treat people bitten by snakes.

Two persons died and at least 23 patients took admission in the DMCH since July 29 mostly from Dhaka, Manikganj, Narayanganj, Mymensingh and Kishoreganj as local hospitals did not have the necessary anti-venom.

"Snakes have become a common sight after our homes were hit by the flood. I went swimming in the pool of water in front of my house last Monday afternoon, when a snake bit me," said Mobassher of Khejurbagan, Keraniganj. His 11-year-old daughter Mitu was also struck by a snake on the same day and got cured after receiving treatment at the DMCH for a couple of days.

Non-poisonous Dhora snakes bit most of the 22 patients admitted over the week and they recovered within a short period. But not everyone was as lucky.

"A poisonous snake took shelter inside my house and bit my daughter as she got down from the bed and stepped on the coiled reptile," said Mijanur Rahman, father of a 7-year-old snakebite patient Mukta from Kishoreganj.

Flood-shelters are not safe either. Bhuttu Khan of Singair, Manikganj was bitten by a poisonous snake at Char Ulail Government Primary School shelter where he along with several

hundred others had taken refuge.

"Most of the village patients rush to the local *Ojhas* (witchdoctors) for treatment at first. These quacks are not equipped to handle the situation so the victims hurry to clinics and hospitals. The delay in treatment makes their condition worse," said MA Faiz, professor of medicine at the DMCH.

Around 10 patients came to the DMCH with severe venomous bites. Faiz informed adding that one was brought dead and another passed away half an hour after arriving while undergoing treatment.

"We do not have any mechanism to identify the venom or the type of snake that bit the patient. The doctors at the DMCH observe the symptoms of the patients for one or two days and provide medicine accordingly," said an intern doctor of the hospital.

"The patients or their relatives often mistreat them and the wounds become infected by the time they come to the hospital," he added.

The DMCH has a sufficient stock of anti snake-venom to face the current rush. The anti-venom is free for the patients, claimed Faiz.

But patients and their relatives told this correspondent that treatment has been expensive.

"I had to buy injections and other medical accessories worth Tk 4500," said Iaj Uddin, the elder brother of Bhuttu, who is undergoing treatment at the ICU (intensive care unit).

32-year-old Chand Miah of Tarakunda, Mymensingh, whom a poisonous snake bit while he was cleaning hyacinth from his fish-hatchery, said he had spent Tk 5000 on his treatment at the DMCH.



A rickshawpuller wades through the floodwater mingled with sewage, carrying as many passengers as possible on his vehicle. He knows that this would give him a chance to charge the passengers extra fare.

## useful telephone numbers

### COURIER SERVICES

#### International

Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724  
Air Couriers Intl (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 Intl Courier- 9536636  
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-

#### Overseas Courier Service-

9550884  
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  
Sundaran Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656  
Sunrise Courier Services- 9558751  
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, 955640  
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4, 9886395  
The Nazrul Institute- 9114602  
Ford Foundation- 8116133  
Alliance Francaise- 8611557  
British Council- 8618967-8, 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- 9120125, 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	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoil	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahar
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan