

Canal survey begins for navigability

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In a bid to protect canals in and around Dhaka from grabbers, the government has launched an extensive survey of the natural channels of water that help check overflow of the drainage system and reduce waterlogging in the city. A government-formed high-powered committee comprising representatives from Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) and other government agencies is conducting the survey aiming to restore navigability of the canals.

Identifying the natural canals in and around the city the committee is likely to submit its findings to principal secretary to the prime minister tomorrow.

Apart from the officials of Wasa's Drainage Circle, the committee has representation from Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB), Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) and Deputy Commissioner (DC), Dhaka.

Sources said following an inter-ministerial meeting which discussed the matter in the wake of severe waterlogging in the city, the Prime Minister's Office directed Dhaka Wasa to

The city experienced worst form of waterlogging last month amid a heavy downpour as most of the natural channels of water and retention basins are either occupied or filled up. "The government will try to put an end of it," said a DTCB official

detect locations and present situation of the water bodies.

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Experts said canals help prevent flood and keep drainage system working properly. Moreover, it acts as natural water reservoir during summer.

A high official of DTCB said the concrete-made drains

actually work like a reservoir rather than a channel for water to pass. "Neither can they absorb water, nor can they carry water to canals or basins as most of them are filled up. Thus, they overflow," he said explaining the reason of waterlogging during floods and monsoon rain.

According to a CS map (Cadesdal Survey map) submitted to the committee by the office of DC (Land), the city has a total of 35 canals. But the number may exceed 44 as all of them could not be identified due to stagnant water, an

insider of DTCB said.

Only 14 of the 35 canals are now flowing normally while the others have lost their natural flow, sources at the DC (Land) office said. Five of them -- Rayerbazar canal, Arambagh canal, Gopibagh canal, Paribagh canal and Shyampur-Kadamtali canal -- have entirely been filled up for construction of roads.

Gabtolli canal, Meradia-Gazaria canal, Dholaikhal 1 and 2 and Hazaribagh canal are partially flowing. Some of the canals such as Ibrahimpur canal, Meradia-Gazaria canal and Ramchandrapur canal are illegally occupied. At least five feet area on either bank of Ibrahimpur canal now hosts illegal makeshift structures, slums and a concrete wall.

Wasa Sources said the canals in 137 square kilometer area inside Dhaka Protection Embankment face man-made barriers to discharging water from the areas including Rayerbazar, Hazaribagh, Kazipara, Shewrapara, Shyamoli and Adabor. They said city people would get rid of waterlogging once their navigability is restored.

PRESENT STATE OF SOME CITY CANALS

Name	Site	length	Width	Present state
Gabtolli Khal	Mazar Road slop to Dhaka-Aricha Road	1.30 km	45 to 20 feet	Road constructed on part of it and partly dead
Ramchandrapur Khal	Turag river to Katasur through Mohammadpur	2.45 km	160 to 15 feet	Part of it leased out. Part of it being used as road. Partially flowing.
Rayer Bazar Khal	Katasur to Beribandh through Sarajafarabad and Sultanganj	2.10 km	50 feet to 10 feet	Entirely filled up and road constructed on it.
Hazaribagh Khal	Hazaribagh to Beribandh through Kalunagar and Sultanganj	0.75 km	45 to 25 feet	1,000 feet stretch of road constructed on its northern part. Southern part is flowing.
Paribagh Khal	Shahbagh to Moghbazar	0.42 km	Average 50 feet	Completely filled up. Road constructed on it.
Arambagh Khal	Bijoy Nagar water tank to Bangladesh Bank	0.32 km	Average 20 feet	Filled up entirely. Road constructed on it.
Gopibagh Khal	Gopibagh to Arambagh Khal, through behind	0.75 km	230 feet	Filled up entirely. Road constructed on it.
Dholai Khal 1	Second Buriganga bridge to Dholai Khal 2	1.93 km	120 to 20 feet	Filled up and box culvert constructed. Partly flowing. Illegal structures exist on it.
Dholai Khal 2	Buriganga river to Dayaganj Bazar through	5.10 km	120 to 50 feet	Filled up, box culvert constructed. Partly flowing.
Dhalpur Khal	Dayaganj to Razarbagh through Jatrabari, Kazirbagh	1.75 km	50 to 30 feet	Road constructed on part of it. Box culvert made from Sayedabad to Maniknagar pond.
Jatrabari-Matuaill-Manda Khal	Dhalpur Khal to Razarbagh through Jatrabari, Dania	6.84 km	80 to 30 feet	Box culvert made on part of it. Waste dumped on other part. Partially flowing.
Ghospakshin Khal	Shitalakhya river to Ghospakshin mouza	1 km	60 to 20 feet	The canal does not exist. Latif Bawani Jute Mill set up there.
Shyampur-	At the border of Shyampur and Kadamtali mouza	1.28 km	60 to 50 feet	DCC constructed road over it.
Kadamtali Khal	Kadamtali mouza of Demra to Deulpara of	1.28 km	Average 60 feet	Filled with garbage and filthy water.

GULSHAN LAKE

Work on bridge, walkway to begin this winter

Approval of PCP awaited to begin construction by next winter

TAWFIQUE ALI

Rajuk intends to begin construction of walkway and six bridges across Gulshan-Bairidhara lake demolishing existing link roads to protect the lake from pollution and encroachment provided the project gets planning commission nod, said one of its officials.

"We hope to begin construction by this winter and are awaiting the planning commission's approval of the Project Concept Paper (PCP)," said the official.

He said that a Tk 100 crore PCP, comprising two components-- bridge and walkway-- has been submitted to the planning commission. The expenditure for the construction

of the bridge has been estimated between Tk 30 to Tk 35 crore.

However, Rajuk Chief Engineer Emdadul Islam expressed his skepticism on when the project might get approval and said that it has been three years since the PCP was submitted.

As to why bridges were not built at the very inception, the Rajuk official said issues of encroachment and pollution were not so pressing at the time the link roads were constructed 20 to 30 years ago.

Professor Muzaffer Ahmad of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), an environmentalist association, said that it is crucial to ascertain the line of demarcation of the lake first according to

the original mouja map to save the water body.

"Whether bridge will serve any environmental purpose or not depends on the very design and other technicalities of such structure," he said. "In case they cause sedimentation in the lake, they will not serve the purpose for which they will be built," he added.

The Rajuk official said that the designated engineering consultants would draw the design and it would be visually attractive.

He also said that bridge in place of roads would facilitate uninterrupted flow of the lake water and prevent sedimentation. Land grabbers sometimes take advantage of sediment or waste deposit along the bank to

encroach into lake.

The idea of building bridges over the Gulshan lake and other water bodies as well is to keep structural obstacle to a minimum so that the lake can be saved from choking and pollution, said Bapa general secretary Abu Naser Khan.

The walkway along the bank must be constructed on poles like wooden culvert without earth filling the lake further, in a discontinued manner. If otherwise, the work will choke the lake further and continued walkway will invite vagabonds, peddlers, muggers and prostitutes to abuse it.

"The authorities have to coordinate the work along with other anti-encroachment measures as a partial job will not serve the purpose," he said.



A view of Gulshan Lake shows how it has been encroached over time.

Electronic traffic signals at 59 city points by Dec

Display of advertisement on vehicles to be banned

BSS, DHAKA

Electronic traffic signals at 59 points of Dhaka metropolitan city would be set up by December to ease severe traffic jam.

This was decided at a meeting of the National Road Safety Council yesterday at the communications ministry with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda in the chair.

The meeting asked Dhaka Transport Board and the police to execute on a priority basis the earlier decision of the council to install video cameras and metal detectors in long-distance coaches to prevent robbery at night.

The minister asked the police to stop movement of all types of vehicles including buses, mini buses, trucks, auto-rickshaws, covered vans and mini-trucks from 8am to 5pm through Abdul Gani Road to make the important roads near the Secretariat jam-free. Only the government vehicles and private cars will be allowed to ply this road during the period.

The meeting also decided to cancel fitness certificates of all vehicles emitting black smoke to make the city's air pollution-free.

Besides, display of advertisements on the bodies of vehicles, which might affect road safety, would be banned.

The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) has been asked to prepare a draft on regulatory policy for display of advertisements on the BRTC and private buses.

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation Executive President Shahjahan Khan, MP, Communications Secretary Md. Shafiqul Islam, DG of the Prime Minister's Office Mohammad Shah Alam, BRTA representative Shamsur Rahman Biswas, RAJUK Chairman Shahid Alam, former vice-chancellor of IUT Professor Dr. Mohammad Anwar Hossain and National Professor Dr. MR Khan attended the meeting.

