

Wasa digs up suffering

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Commuters and residents of Kalabagan have been suffering for the last one and a half months because of non-stop road digging by Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) on two lanes in the area.

Wasa started digging the roads at the beginning of May but has not been able to complete the work yet despite the directive from Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to all utility service providers that they must finish their respective tasks by the end of May.

"The delay is due to the installation of a water pipe in the area which will hopefully be completed within another

week," said a senior official of Wasa.

But residents are unhappy with the situation.

"Rickshaws do not enter the area due to the digging and often I have to cross the dug up street on foot to find a transport," said Musharrat Nazneen, a resident of the Kalabagan 2nd Lane. Since the digging started, school buses, office transports and taxis have not been able to enter this road. Even those who own cars, are either unable to bring their vehicles out or have been forced to keep the cars at an alternative location.

"We had our car parked near the main road and had to walk all the way," said Niloy Ahsan, a student.

Other residents complained about the dust that constantly blows around the work site.

"The sand and dirt turns to mud with the slightest rain leading to an even more miserable situations for us," said Mohammad Ali, a businessman.

The alley that connects Bashiruddin Road with Kalabagan 2nd Lane has also become blocked with piles of debris from the Wasa digging.

"We cannot walk through this alley to get to Bashiruddin Road or Green Road anymore. Most people take the main road which is twice the distance," said a resident of Bashiruddin Road.

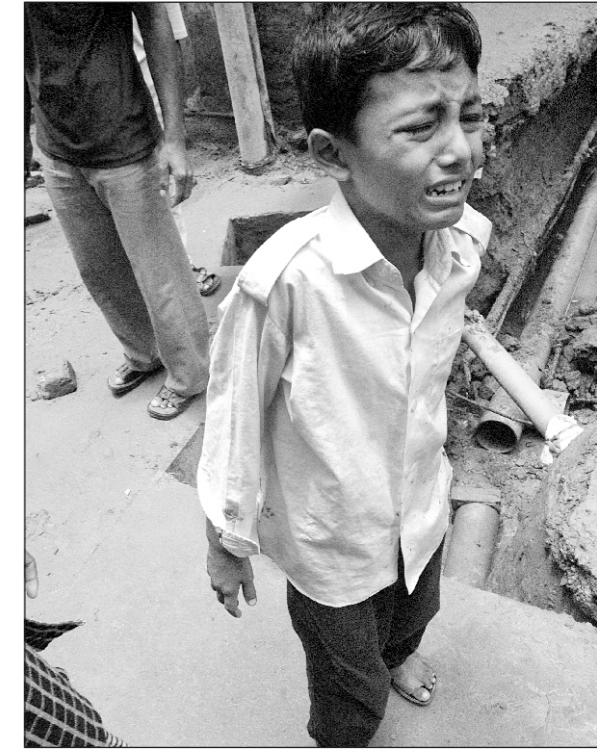
The connecting street between Kalabagan 2nd and 1st Lane is also riddled with potholes and waterlogging, making communication even tougher. The 2nd Lane was also acting as a link road between Dhanmondi and Kalabagan. Surprisingly, even though this road has been temporarily closed due to the Wasa work, the authorities have not opened up either Bashiruddin Road or 1st Lane as a temporary link between the two areas.

For the people of Dhanmondi, Jhigatola, Rayerbazar and other nearby areas who regularly commuted through this road to get to the other parts of the city, it's a frustrating scenario.

"We have to go through Panthopath or Science Laboratory to get to Moghbazar and adjoining areas and a lot of precious time is lost that way," said Sharfuddin, a regular commuter. He pointed out that traffic congestion around Russel Square, Panthopath and Science Laboratory had increased due to this reason.

"We are going to fine Wasa for the delay. At the moment, we are urging them to complete the water pipe installation as quickly as possible," said a senior official of DCC.

"As soon as Wasa completes its job, we will carpet the road and restore it to its original state. Hopefully, that will be done by the end of this month or by the beginning of July.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN
Iffat, a 10-year old returning from school cries in fear as he slipped on the mud dug out piled up by Wasa in 2nd Lane in Kalabagan. A pedestrian helped the little boy up.

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