

Most houses out of sewage net

House owners got line connected with storm water drainage to evade govt service charge; sewage treatment plant remains idle

PINAKI ROY

The sewage treatment plant of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) remains underused for years due to non-cooperation of the house owners.

A large number of house owners in Dhaka resort to linking their sewage discharge connection directly to the storm water drainage instead of sewage management networks to evade government service charges. This results in severe pollution to the rivers, canals and lakes in and around the capital.

The city storm water drainage is directly connected to these water bodies, while sewage network is connected to Pagla sewage treatment plant in Narayanganj.

Sources in Wasa say every day the city dwellers generate around 3.6 lakh cubic metres of excreta, of which a major portion directly gets mixed with the waters of rivers, lakes and canals

due to the ill practice of the house owners. Right now there are more than five lakh buildings in the city, a Wasa source says, adding, half of these buildings are under the water supply network.

However, the Wasa authorities have only 59,310 buildings under their sewage discharge connection, the rest are contributing to the water pollution, he adds.

Pagla sewerage treatment plant has a capacity of treating 120,000 cubic metres of excreta every day, nearly one-third of total human waste generated by the city people.

But the authorities say they are getting maximum 50,000 CM of excreta every day to treat, and sometimes it comes down to 30,000 CM.

The rest of the excreta is being directly discharged to the water bodies through storm sewerage network, as almost the entire city has that network.

According to the authorities, they have so far

linked water connections to about 2.48 lakh buildings (Wasa counts single connection for an apartment building, while city corporation counts each apartment for their connection). But they have sewerage connections to only 59,310 buildings in the capital.

The house owners have to pay as much as water bills to the government if they want to take sewage management service.

"So the house owners connect the sewage line to the storm sewerage drainage to save the money," says a Wasa official.

There are two methods of excreta management in the country - connecting to the sewage system and soaking well method (stocking excreta in a tank and then sending it to the ground level through a well). The house owners have to spend around Tk 3 lakh extra to build a soakwell.

The Wasa sewage management system

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NIKO GRAFT
Khaleda's petition for quashing case rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After four days of hearing on Khaleda Zia's petition to quash the Niko corruption case filed against her, the High Court (HC) yesterday rejected the petition considering it as not submitted before the court.

After arguments and submissions made by counsels of the petitioner, an HC division bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mashruque Hosain Ahmed passed the order yesterday.

Lawyers on both sides yesterday

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Minus-2 'conspiracy' still on
Says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former premier Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a 'conspiracy' is still on to implement the minus 2 formula in a bid to render her ineligible for contesting in the next parliamentary election.

Seeing the prosecution's attitude it seems a conspiracy is still on for railroading the trial to convict me, in a bid to make me ineligible for the upcoming election. The minus 2 formula is still on," Abdul Mannan, a counsel of the Awami League (AL) president, quoted her as saying after cross examining the first prosecution witness in the Barge-mounted power plant graft case yesterday during the fifth day of the trial.

Meanwhile, a special court yesterday set May 29 for starting hearing of depositions of other witnesses in the case against Hasina and seven others.

Following a time seeking petition of the defence, Judge Firoz

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PHOTO STAR

Rainwater drainage lines and sewage lines in the capital get clogged due to sewage and garbage in the same lines. The photo was taken at Motijheel-Kamalapur road as Wasa tries to clear a line.

Falu sued for dodging Tk 2.75cr income tax

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday filed a case against detained former BNP lawmaker Mosaddak Ali Falu for dodging Tk 2.75 crore income tax between 1996 and 2006.

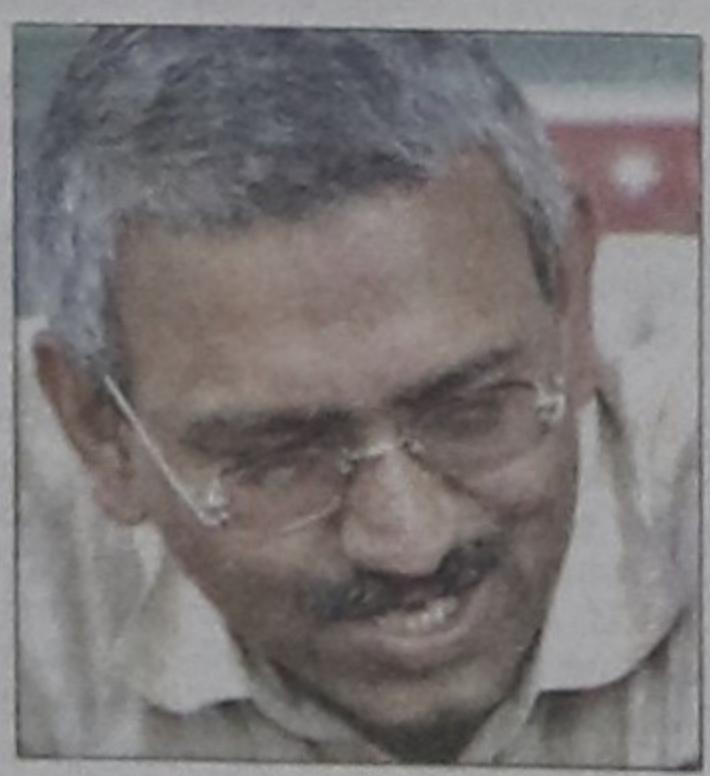
Deputy Tax Commissioner of NBR Nurul Amin filed the case against the former lawmaker with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

NBR showed Falu's tax evasion upon his income of Tk 11,21,65,517 for the years 1996 to 2006.

After hearing the case yesterday, Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque recorded the statement of the complainant, took it into cognizance, and directed the jail authorities to produce Falu before the court on June 2.

In his order, the judge said he passed the order as the charges brought against him under the Income Tax Ordinance 1984 were found to be true.

In his complaint, Nurul Amin mentioned that Falu had evaded paying a total of Tk 2,75,65,221 in incometax.



Falu repeatedly gave false information to the income tax department about his real income and expenditure, the complainant said. Falu, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, also owner of private satellite television channels ntv and Rtv, and a daily newspaper Amar Desh, was arrested from his Dhaka Cantonment residence on February 6 last year.

The army-led joint forces seized government relief materials from Falu's factory in Savar on February 9.

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ROHINGYA REFUGEES

Bid to revive deal for repatriation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, yesterday agreed to revive the tripartite agreement under which Rohingya refugees would be able to voluntarily return to their homeland in Myanmar.

Antonio Guterres, the visiting UN high commissioner for refugees, said in a joint press briefing following his meeting with foreign adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury at a state guesthouse, "Our intention is to re-establish the trilateral mechanism among Bangladesh, UNHCR and Myanmar to create a condition for voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya refugees to Myanmar."

The UN high commissioner for refugees during the briefing also dismissed any possibility of awarding Bangladeshi citizenship to the 27,000 Rohingya refugees staying in Bangladesh. "Local integration is not on the table, but we will look at a number of other ways to see that they live their lives with dignity."

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TALKS WITH CITIZENS' GROUPS

Govt sits with business leaders today to set time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government sits today with business leaders to set the schedule for a dialogue with them as part of its talks with citizens' groups in parallel with the ongoing dialogue with political parties.

"We have invited the business community to work out the plan of the meeting," Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said yesterday after a meeting with his three cabinet colleagues at Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif's office.

The meeting also attended by the law adviser, Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader and LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal discussed ways of holding similar talks with other citizens' groups.

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BARAPUKURIA COALMINE GRAFT

4 ex-alliance ministers quizzed at jail gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former ministers Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Motiur Rahman Nizami, M Shamsul Islam and Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday denied any wrongdoing in awarding the Barapukuria coalmine deal to CMC, saying they "only" approved the deal on the basis of recommendations from the ministry concerned.

"We did not get much time - we generally go through matters referred to us in a short time and approve them," they were quoted as saying by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Monirul Haque, the investigation officer of the case.

Lawyers of Nizami and Shamsul were present during the questioning of their clients.

ACC Deputy Director Monirul Haque told reporters at the jail gate that the investigation into the Barapukuria graft case is at the final stage and submission of the charge sheet depends on the authority concerned.

Monirul interrogated Jamaat-e-Islami Amee and former industries minister Nizami for about two

hours, former LGRD minister Mannan Bhuiyan for about 35 minutes, former information minister Shamsul Islam for half an hour and former health minister Mosharraf Hossain for two hours.

"We will counter their arguments on the basis of documents," the ACC official told reporters.

The CMC was awarded the coalmine deal without a re-tender, which caused a loss of about Tk 158 crore to the exchequer," Monirul said, adding, "The CMC, which was the third lowest bidder, was awarded the deal instead of the second lowest bidder."

The lowest bidder had won the

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AL won't join talks if Hasina not freed

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League (AL) yesterday said it would not join the ongoing dialogue with the caretaker government without its detained President Sheikh Hasina.

Briefing reporters about the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) meeting last night, acting president Zillur Rahman said, "We won't take part in talks with the government without a freed Hasina no matter what the circumstances might be."

The working committee's decision to boycott any discussions without Hasina came in line with the grassroots' opinions aired at Monday's extended meeting.

Jalil charged with ill-gotten wealth

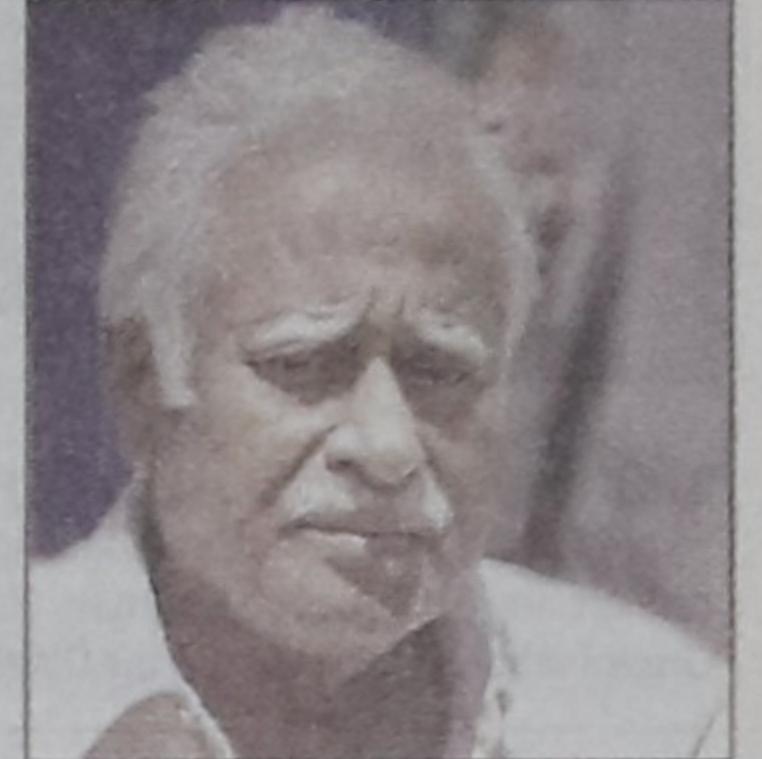
COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil in a case filed for amassing wealth worth Tk 36 lakh illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Enamul Haque Chowdhury, the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

Jalil is currently in Singapore on parole for medical treatment.

The AL general secretary was arrested on May 28 last year and remained in custody for over eight months without any specific



charges. Finally on January 1 this year, he was shown arrested in this case filed on December 18 last year with Ramna Police Station.

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