

Natural reservoir runs dry

Several lakh people of Savar's Bhakurta now without drinking water after Wasa started pumping out water

HELEMUL ALAM

Five years ago, Dhaka Wasa announced the discovery of a natural underground water reservoir in Savar's Bhakurta.

It stated that water was accumulating there from an underground Himalayan channel and it would not deplete in 30-40 years as the aquifer would be naturally refilled by water from the Himalayas.

But something started to go very wrong when Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) started pumping out water from the reservoir with deep tube

wells. Since January last year, several lakh residents of Bhakurta and Tetuljhara unions in Savar and Taranagar union in Keraniganj have been experiencing severe water crisis.

Almost all the hand-driven tube wells in the areas went dry while farmers could not cultivate paddy due to irrigation water shortages.

Wasa could not give any exact reason but it primarily thinks that extracting water from the deep aquifer is causing a problem

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What used to be a pond full of water several years ago is now a mere depression in Savar's Bhakurta. Since January last year, residents of the area have been experiencing severe water crisis. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

People have to walk 2km for water

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

"Other sufferings are bearable, but not suffering for lack of water."

"I came to fetch drinking water crossing a big canal. On the way back, I get down into the canal and cross to the other side as I cannot walk along the bamboo with the heavy pitcher," said 28-year-old Kulsum Begum.

Kulsum lives in Patjoynagar village of Kamarkhola union in Khulna's Dacope upazila. The village is over 50 kilometres from Khulna city.

For water, she has to walk to the pond adjacent to a SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

'Police beat man dead'

Says family of deceased; cops claim he 'died of stroke'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was allegedly beaten to death by police in the capital's Uttarkhan area yesterday morning.

The dead is Moniruzzaman Hawlader Monir, 50, a landlord in the area.

Police, however, denied the allegation and said he might have died of a stroke.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Moniruzzaman's

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AL candidates win all 3 by-polls

Turnout just over 5 percent in Dhaka

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and RASHIDUL HASAN

Awami League candidate Md Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin won the by-election to Dhaka-10 constituency, held amid the lowest ever voter turnout due to the coronavirus outbreak.

In the Gaibandha-3 constituency, AL candidate Umme Kulsum Smrity won the by-polls with 201,482 votes, while her closest rival was BNP candidate Moimul Hasan Sadiq, who bagged 41,408 votes, said Returning Officer Mahbubur Rahman.

In Bagerhat-4, AL candidate Amirul Alam Milon won big. He got 1.82 lakh votes whilst his rival JP's Sajon Kumar Mistri got 3,744 votes.

Meanwhile, Dhaka-10 BNP candidate Sheikh Rabiul

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

13 people die as truck collides with pick-up

At least 7 injured at the accident-prone spot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

At least 13 people died after a pick-up van collided head-on with a salt-laden truck on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway at Lohagara upazila's Jangalia in Chattogram.

Another seven people were injured in the accident, which took place around 9:40pm.

Only two people -- Jashim Uddin, 30, a local journalist, and his younger brother Belal Uddin, 28, from Lohagara -- were identified

among the dead.

Jahedul Islam, a friend of Jashim, told The Daily Star that he saw him off around 9:00pm at a local kitchen market. Just 40 minutes later, he got the news of the accident and rushed to the spot where he saw his friend lying dead.

He said there is a sharp turn at Jangalia where many vehicles would get into such accidents.

The identity of the rest could not be known immediately, police said, adding that the casualties may see a

hike.

Afrujul Haque Tutul, additional police superintendent in Chattogram district (south) police, told The Daily Star that at least 12 people died on the spot. The van was carrying day labourers to Cox's Bazar.

The salt-laden truck was coming from Cox's Bazar, Tutul said, adding that the injured were whisked off to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver, he added.

One killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A suspected drug peddler was killed in a "shootout" with police in Pabna's Santhia upazila early yesterday.

Abdul Alim, 35, was

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 22

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-55 12-45 4-45 6-16 7-45
JAMAAT 5-30 1-15 5-00 6-20 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

EC postpones CCC elections, two by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has postponed Chattogram City Corporation elections and two other by-polls due to the coronavirus outbreak.

"Elections to Chattogram City Corporation and the by-polls of Bogura-1 and Jashore-6 have been postponed for an indefinite period," Election Commission (EC) Senior Secretary Md Alamgir said after a commission meeting yesterday.

"The commission made these decisions taking health risks into consideration," he said at a briefing at the EC media centre.

The commission will fix new dates (for the elections) when the health department announces that the country is free of the novel coronavirus risk, he added.

The EC took the decision after the second death -- a 73-year-old who tested positive for coronavirus -- had been reported and four more people were detected with Covid-19. Health Minister Zahid Maleque, at a press briefing at the office of the Directorate General of Health Services in Mohakhali, said that with the new cases, the total number of confirmed cases is 24.

The Chattogram City Corporation SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Let Bhutto recognise Bangladesh first'



A delegation of Indian Women's Federation, led by Aruna Asaf Ali, calls on Bangabandhu on March 22, 1972.

MARCH 22, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

MUJIB TURN DOWN PAK TALKS OFFER

Sharply rebuking Pakistan President ZA Bhutto for indulging in purposeless talk, Bangabandhu turns down the offer to sit and talk for a settlement. In an interview with Associated Press, Bangabandhu declares, "Let Bhutto recognise Bangladesh first and then we will decide what to do and what not to do. This sort of talking in the air will not solve any problem. He must recognise the reality. Then there can be some way out."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Food inflation likely

Warn FAO, agricultural analysts over panic buying, lockdowns

REUTERS, Singapore

Lockdowns and panic food buying due to the coronavirus pandemic could ignite world food inflation even though there are ample supplies of staple grains and oilseeds in key exporting nations, a senior economist at FAO and agricultural analysts said.

The world's richest nations poured unprecedented aid into the global economy as coronavirus cases ballooned across Europe and the United States, with the number of deaths in Italy outstripping those in mainland China, where the virus originated.

With over 270,000 infections and more than 11,000 deaths, the epidemic has stunned the world and drawn comparisons with periods such as World War Two and the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.

"All you need is panic buying from big importers such as millers or governments to create a crisis," said Abdolreza Abbassian,

chief economist at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"It is not a supply issue, but it is a behavioural change over food security," he told Reuters by phone from Rome, the FAO headquarters. "What if bulk buyers think they can't get wheat or rice shipments in May or June? That is what could lead to a global food supply crisis."

Consumers across the world from Singapore to the United States have queued at super markets in recent weeks to stock up on items ranging from rice and hand sanitizers to toilet paper.

The global benchmark Chicago wheat futures rose more than 6% this week, the biggest weekly gain in nine months, while rice prices in Thailand (RI:THBKN5-P1), the world's 2nd largest exporter of the grain, have climbed to the highest since August 2013.

France's grain industry is scrambling SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Carew steps up to produce hand sanitisers

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Amid a shortage of hand sanitizers against the growing demand, Carew and Co (Bangladesh) Ltd, the country's sole state-owned distillery, has stepped forward to produce the alcohol-based solution for masses as part of its social responsibility.

Many shops and pharmacies have run out all sort of hand rubs as consumers have been thronging the stores to get a hand on the disinfecting product since the first coronavirus cases were confirmed on March 8.

There is also a scarcity of isopropyl alcohol, the primary raw material needed to prepare the SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

করোনাভাইরাস প্রতিরোধে সম্প্রতি বিদেশ ফেরত এবং তাদের সংস্পর্শে আসা সকল ব্যক্তিকে এবং ইতোমধ্যে করোনাভাইরাস আক্রান্ত রোগীর সংস্পর্শে আসা সকলকে কর্তৃপক্ষের নজরদারিতে ১৪ দিন পর্যন্ত কোয়ারেন্টাইনে থাকা বাধ্যতামূলক। এক্ষেত্রে আপনার অবস্থান স্থানীয় প্রশাসন ও স্বাস্থ্য কর্তৃপক্ষকে অবিলম্বে অবহিত করুন।

কোয়ারেন্টাইনকৃত ব্যক্তি ১৪ দিন ঘরের বাইরে বের হবেন না এবং নিজ বাড়ির নির্ধারিত একটি কক্ষে অবস্থান করবেন। কোয়ারেন্টাইনকৃত ব্যক্তির আত্মীয়-স্বজন, বন্ধু-বান্ধব, উক্ত ব্যক্তির সংস্পর্শে আসতে পারবেন না। জনসাধারণকে এ ব্যাপারে সহায়তা করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো হচ্ছে।

কেউ আইন বা নির্দেশনা লঙ্ঘন করলে সংক্রামক রোগ (প্রতিরোধ, নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও নির্মূল) আইন, ২০১৮ অনুযায়ী তাদের জেল বা জরিমানা বা উভয়দিক হতে পারে।

স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে চলুন, জনসমাগম এড়িয়ে চলুন এবং যার যার অবস্থান থেকে করোনাভাইরাস মোকাবেলায় জাতিকে সহায়তা করুন।

আইডিএসআর প্রয়োজনে সন্দেহজনক করোনাভাইরাস আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তির বাড়িতে গিয়ে রক্তের নমুনা সংগ্রহ করবে।

করোনাভাইরাস (COVID-19) প্রতিরোধে Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) গাইডলাইন এবং আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তিদের সংস্পর্শে আসা ব্যক্তিদের কোয়ারেন্টাইন প্রসিডিওর এবং COVID-19 রোগে মৃতদেহ নিরাপদভাবে দাফন/সৎকার/ব্যবস্থাপনার নির্দেশনা গাইড দেখতে ভিজিট করুনঃ www.dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd

করোনাভাইরাস বিষয়ক এবং সাধারণ সর্দি, কাশি ও জ্বরের চিকিৎসার জন্য ঘরে বসে চিকিৎসকের পরামর্শ পেতে কল করুনঃ

১৬২৬৩ (স্বাস্থ্য বাতায়ন), ৩৩৩ এবং আইডিএসআর এর হট লাইনঃ ০১৯৩৭ ১১০০১১, ০১৯৩৭ ০০০০১১, ০১৯২৭ ৭১১৭৮৪, ০১৯২৭ ৭১১৭৮৫ নম্বরে।

স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়

স্বাস্থ্য বাতায়ন ১৬২৬৩ ডাক্তারের সেবা, ২৪ ঘণ্টা