

DOWN TO EARTH

Bottled water trade on without BSTI approval

By Khalilur Rahman

Locally produced bottled water, now on sale in the market, is making good business. Several firms have marketed their products in attractive plastic containers under different brand names with labels of 'mineral' or 'pure' water. The price of each bottle varies from Taka 8 to 12 depending on the quantity. Some of the manufacturers of the item have also clearly printed in bold letters on the labels that the contents are of WHO (World Health Organisation) standard.

In the absence of any official supervision on the trade of this type of water it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of firms engaged in the field. But The Daily Star correspondent Inam Ahmed sent to conduct a survey on the production, sale and quality of bottled water reliably learnt that at least half a dozen plants are manufacturing the item. In view of the increased demand for the product some other entrepreneurs are also planning to set up water treatment factories, traders told the Star.

The quality of most of the bottled water has not yet been tested by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) and as such those have no standards mark. One of the water producing firms submitted the sample of its product to the BSTI for quality testing in November last year. But due to inadequate facilities available at the BSTI laboratory the water sample could not be tested for certification. Afterwards the BSTI asked the same firm to deposit its water sample for test when provisions for proper examination were made by the authority. Despite repeated reminders no sample was sent to BSTI for the test, sources told the Star.

Only one firm submitted its water sample in March to the BSTI and certificate showing 'drinking water' was issued in favour of its product. But the company is selling the product as 'mineral water' of WHO standard printed in the label. A BSTI source said that the firm was not given the standard mark as 'mineral water' which it was using. The BSTI has issued letter to the firm to correct the label by omitting 'mineral water' but to no effect, the source added. The source further said that a series of 20 tests was carried

out on the water sample before granting certificate as 'drinking water' and there was no follow up whether the company was selling the same product that it sent for testing to the BSTI. The BSTI author-

present in what is termed as 'mineral water'. People in western countries are particularly inclined to take mineral water for its food value instead of simple water, a BSTI official said. The concentration of

useful for health. The WHO standard allows maximum concentration of solids in a litre of water up to 500 mg which can be extended, in some cases to 1500 mg. The BSTI follows the WHO standard.

In case of pure drinking water standard set by WHO specifies that each litre should contain 0.3 mg iron, 0.1 mg manganese, 1 mg copper, 5 mg zinc, 75 mg calcium, 200 mg sulphate (SO₄) and 0.6 to 1.2 mg fluoride. The maximum permissible concentration of these substances in pure water set by WHO is: iron - 1.0 mg, manganese - 0.5 mg, copper - 1.5 mg, zinc - 15 gm, calcium - 200 mg, sulphate - 400 mg and fluoride - 1.5 mg. According to an expert, heavy concentration of fluoride may cause tooth problems.

Talking to The Daily Star a spokesman of the BSTI said that in the absence of proper supervision and sample testing it was difficult to say how the manufacturers of bottled water were maintaining WHO standards, although they were claiming to do so. There were complaints of the presence of moss-like substances in some bottled water on sale in the market, it is learnt. A consumer came to the Star office with a sealed bottle of muddy water which he bought from local market. The bottle with the label of 'mineral water' is now at our disposal.

The BSTI spokesman said that the testing of bottles was no less important than the contents in those. The quality of plastic used in producing bottles must be up to the standard. Otherwise, the users of bottled water may be exposed to serious health hazards, the spokesman added. He said that the authority was actively considering the need for testing the quality of water and the bottles for public interest. For this the BSTI has recommended to the higher authority to make the testing of water obligatory. At present the BSTI tests 113 items of mass consumption. Some of the items include edible and coconut oil, newsprint, fertilizer, CI sheet, loaves of bread, biscuits, etc. Bottled water was not included in the list of compulsory items as an affluent section of the people consumes it, the BSTI source said.



Bottled water on sale at a city shop.

— Star photo

ity has no such mechanism to collect water samples from the market for testing nor is it required under law, another BSTI source pointed out. He, however, said that three more companies have voluntarily submitted samples of their products for certification but tests are yet to be carried out.

WHO has laid down standard specifications for pure water along with its colour, taste and smell and also the safe level of minerals to be

200 dwellings washed away

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 15: About 200 houses were washed away Wednesday evening as fresh areas in the district went under the water of swelling Karotia and Ichhamati rivers, says a delayed report of UNB.

Indian army chief to visit US

WASHINGTON, Aug 15: The chief of the Indian Army Staff, General S F Rodrigues is visiting the US from August 18 to August 31. He is scheduled to arrive in New York on August 18 and leave from Honolulu for Japan on August 31.

Trial of killers

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serve the day. The brief rally was presided over by Justice K. M. Sobhan and was addressed among others by AL leader Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdul Razzak, Ganatantri Party leader Azizul Islam Khan, Communist Party leader Ajoy Roy, Dr. S. A. Malek of Bangladesh University of Science and Technology, wife of Kader Siddiqi.

Speakers at the rally called for passage of the Indemnity (repeal) Bill to pave the way for trying the killers of Bangladesh.

K. M. Sobhan said that without eradicating terrorism, a government cannot be stable and that the anti-terrorism drive will start with the passage of the Indemnity (repeal) Bill. The Indemnity Ordinance has blackened the Constitution, he added.

Sajeda Chowdhury said that Bangladesh would not exist without Mujib but the nation had to struggle for 16 years for the trial of his killers. "From now on we will resist not protest," she added.

She expressed her resentment over the non-broadcasting of any programme on radio and television on Mujib.

She said that the present government was misleading the people. Just a few days ago, during the anti-autocratic movement Begum Zia said that the media would be the people's media but what were the people now getting from it, she questioned.

Abdur Razzak said that it is in no way possible to give democracy a institutional shape without the trial of Mujib's killers.

Later, a largely attended silent procession was brought out from the Shaheed Minar which ended at Bangladesh Bhaban in Dhanmondi.

Our Gopalganj Correspondent adds: The 16th death anniversary of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed in a befitting manner in Tungipara.

The day's programme included Quran khwani, milad mahfil, special prayers, discussion meetings and feeding of destitutes.

Awami League central leaders Abdul Jalil, K M Jahangir, MP, and Rahmat Ali, MP, laid floral wreaths at the mazar of Bangladesh.

A huge mourning meeting was held at the mazar premises in the evening. Organised by the Tungipara upazila AL unit, it was presided over by Rustum Ali Mollah and was attended by the AL central leaders.

Students of various schools and colleges and members of the public also laid floral wreaths at the mazar of Bangladesh.

Editorial on page 4

AL slates govt for not broadcasting programme on Sheikh Mujib

Awami League censured the government for not broadcasting any programme through Radio and Television on the life and works of country's independence leader Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of his 16th anniversary of death Thursday, reports UNB.

There can be no greater shame and misfortune than the media mum on the Great Warrior of Independence, Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib, in the autocracy-free Bangladesh, Awami League Publicity Secretary Mohammad Nasim said in a statement.

Nasim, also Chief Whip of the Opposition, said the entire nation expected that Radio and TV would put up special programmes on Bangladesh commemorating the 'national mourning day'. But their hopes were dashed to ground.

The BNP government will have to taste the consequence of any evil efforts to strike a rift in the national unity forged through recent political developments.

CEC

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national requirement of the coming referendum in determining the form of government, the Chief Election Commissioner emphasised the importance of spontaneous participation of the people in it.

He said, to express the opinion of the people is constitutional right. He said the verdict of the coming referendum would settle a most important aspect of the country's administration.

He also emphasized the need for educating the voters about the issue of the referendum and the necessity of their participation in it.

Rouf called upon all concerned to work hard for bringing the total reflection of the true verdict of the entire nation in the coming referendum.

Justice Syed Misbah Uddin Hossain, in his speech, urged the officials to conduct the coming referendum successfully by exercising their experience and efficiency which they have gathered during the last parliamentary elections.

The participants of the conference also exchanged views with the senior Election Commission officials regarding matters relating to the conduct of the coming referendum.

The Midnight File

US plans permanent human settlements on moon

WASHINGTON, Aug 15: President George Bush has said the US goal ultimately is to establish 'permanent human settlements on the moon and putting humans on Mars'. Bush in his annual national security strategy message to the Congress the infrastructure of space launch capability will be to the 21st century what the great highway and dam projects were to the 20th reliable space launchers will provide the highway to space and the solar system in the next century, reports PTI.

Gorbachev aide thrown out of CP

MOSCOW, Aug 15: Alexander Yakovlev, the chief architect of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's reform movement Perestroika, was thrown out of the Soviet Communist Party today in a brief dispatch. Tass said the party's Central Control Commission had ruled that Yakovlev's continued membership was 'impossible because of his actions running counter to the party rules and aimed at splitting the party,' reports AFP.

Shahabuddin

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death anniversary of the ex-president.

The General Secretary of Awami League also informed the Acting President about it and reminded him that her party's previous programme on the birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which fell on March 17 this year had been rejected by him.

Two days later, when a few cabinet ministers met the Acting President in connection with an important administrative matter, the question of the proposed TV programme was incidentally discussed and the ministers present agreed that a non controversial programme such as a discussion on the life and work of the late President might be arranged by the Bangladesh Television.

Three days later, the State Minister for Information, the Secretary for Information and the Director-General of BTV rushed to the Acting President in his office and told him that a big procession of Awami League supporters was going to 'Gherao' the TV Bhaban at Rampura to press the demand for a TV programme. The State Minister sought the Acting President's advice.

After a discussion, it was decided that an innocuous programme including a discussion by some respectable persons would be arranged.

The State Minister for Information after leaving the President's Secretariat gave such an assurance to the leaders of the demonstrators, who in the meantime, reached the main gate of the TV Bhaban. On receiving this assurance,

the demonstrators left the place.

The Director-General of BTV after a day, informed the Acting President that a suitable non-controversial programme was being arranged for August 15.

After this, the Acting President knew nothing about the matter till he found in a section of the press, this mischievous and false statement that he had taken personal interest and initiative in this matter. The impugned news item quoted statement from a person that Acting President should not interfere with the function of the 'elected government'.

This statement is totally misconceived, because until the result of referendum in pursuance of the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill is declared with affirmative votes of the people, the existing form of the government will remain and the Acting President is alone responsible to the people for whatever is done by the 'elected government'.

Further more, the allegation that the Acting President by his personal 'initiative and interest' breached his neutrality is totally false, because his neutrality is beyond question.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Liberty Forum Chairman Justice Abdul Rahman Choudhury in a statement Wednesday expressed surprise at the press reports that the Acting President had shown interest in airing special programmes on radio and television on August 15.



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NOTICE FOR PAYMENT OF ARREAR GAS BILLS

Some of the gas consumers of our Company are not clearing their gas bills regularly. Despite earlier efforts to attract their attention to the matter by direct correspondence and notices in mass media like Radio, Television and Newspapers, the situation has not improved to the expected level. The Company, as such, is compelled to resort to severing gas connections of defaulters.

It is specially mentionable that a huge amount of arrear gas bills of Staff Quarters of Government/Autonomous/Private Organisations remain unpaid. Amount payable in this respect is on the increase at an alarming rate. It may be noted that once the line is disconnected its restoration will be time consuming and expensive.

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7, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.	
Lalmatia (Zone No. 3)	- Phone : 31 72 15
1/5, Block-A, Lalmatia, Dhaka.	
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5, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka.	
Mirpur (Zone No. 5)	- Phone : Nil
126/1, Senpara Parbata	
Mirpur, Dhaka.	

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AUTHORITY



বাংলা একাডেমী ঢাকা

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলা একাডেমীর সম্মানিত সদস্যবৃন্দের অবগতির জন্যে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আগামী ডিসেম্বর মাসের শেষার্ধ্বে বাংলা একাডেমীর বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

যে সকল সদস্যের চাঁদা বাকি আছে তাদেরকে ১৪ আগস্ট ১৩৯৮/৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯৯১ তারিখের মধ্যে একাডেমীর বিধি অনুযায়ী চাঁদা পরিশোধ করতে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

ইতোমধ্যে কোনো সদস্যের ঠিকানা পরিবর্তিত হয়ে থাকলে তাও জানানোর জন্যে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

আনিসুর রহমান

উপপরিচালক
পরিষদ উপবিভাগ
বাংলা একাডেমী ঢাকা-১০০০

বাংলা একাডেমী মাসিক পত্র 'লেখা' প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। মূল্য তিন টাকা। বার্ষিক সভার ৪০.০০ টাকা। বাংলা একাডেমীর সদস্যদের জন্যে বার্ষিক সভার ২০.০০ টাকা।

ডি এফ পি(জি) ৯২৫৯-১৩/৮

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Col (ret'd) Farooq Rahman speaking at a discussion meeting on August 15 changeover at the Freedom Party office Thursday.

— Star photo

Farooq

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cautioned that its passage would result in "widespread crisis in the country." "This would lead to unearthing all the political killings in the country," he said.

Addressing the meeting, FP Co-Chairman Col. (Ret'd) Rashid, said the except Awami League, all the parties in the JS are enjoying the fruits of the August 15 incidents. "We, by leading the change-over facilitated the BNP, JP and Jamaat do politics in the country. But these parties embraced the 'fifth columnists,' he regretted and called them 'munafek' (betrayers). "These parties must suffer the consequences of the pre-75 ruler if they did not correct themselves," he warned. The BNP and JP have also buried their founder leaders by voting in favour of parliamentary system, he said and termed the two parties as 'opportunists.'

"I was waiting to see the Parliament pass the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill and who was to try me and Faruq, Rashid said. The FP Co-Chairman was also very critical of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed's assuming the acting presidency and validating all his actions through constitution amendment. If Shahabuddin Ahmed's taking over power and other acts were legitimised through constitution amendment, then the incidents from August 15, 1975 to Zia's ascending to power should also be legitimised, he opined.

Southeast Asia

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They also mentioned that the key role played by Indonesia in shaping the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Instead of looking at Western models there could be effective interactions between regional grouping like ASEAN and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) for mutual benefit of member countries, they said.

Local Government Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder was the chief guest at the seminar jointly organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia and the centre for development research, Bangladesh (CDRB) at Sonargaon Hotel.

Presided over by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley, Chairman CDRB the seminar was also addressed by Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) Soemanko Iswadi, Ambassador of Indonesia in Bangladesh, Oye Djundjuran member of parliament of Indonesia, Irshadul Huq, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Nazmul Huq Director General of Family Planning, SM Ali, Editor, The Daily Star and Hans Rolloos, Senior Adviser to the Ministry of Land.

Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder expressed his delight that the seminar provided an opportunity to deliberate on the experiences in rural development in Indonesia. For Bangladesh too, rural devel-

opment is a matter of top priority the Minister said adding "We have so much to learn from each other's experiences."

He said that the present democratically elected government of Bangladesh was keen on ensuring integrated rural development so that there was balanced development of the whole country.

Celebration of Indonesia's independence day in Bangladesh was of special significance for the peoples of the two brotherly Muslim countries.

3 killed as tanker hits launch in Dhaleshwari

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 15: At least three persons were drowned and another 70 injured when an oil-tanker struck a Dhaka-bound passenger launch on the Dhaleshwari river near Croker Char, about four kilometres from here, on Thursday.

CU strike

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Shibir supporters also brought out several processions on the CU campus and in the city. They stopped buses and the shuttle train, plying between the campus and the city. They also obstructed the students and teachers in attending classes, campus sources said.