

# High content of arsenic found in tubewell water

From our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Sept 13: The dwellers of Kushtia town are drinking water containing a poisonous element arsenic skin and stomach diseases have already been reported after taking water in many areas.

It is reported that presence of arsenic was found in water, pumped out by hand tubewells of Kushtia sadar and Bheramara Poushavara, according to Public Health Engineering Department source. Many people in Kushtia Poushavara area were attacked with arsenic action which caused their severe illness and skin diseases developed in their bodies, the attending physicians said.

The Executive Engineer Public Health Department, Kushtia was informed of the matter by the physicians suspecting arsenic action in their bodies. He immediately took steps and visited the houses of the victims. They took sample of water from the tubewells. On his initiative public Health Regional Research centre sent a team of experts who collected water from 14 such tubewells.

After thorough examination arsenic was found in eight places and the result given below according to the rate of contents in one liter.

In tubewell of Diddar Hossain of Courtpara 0.750 milligram tubewell of Shamsul Huq, Courtpara had 0.135 milligram, tubewell of Shahaduddin of Paschim Majampur had 0.33 milligram, in tubewell of Am-

lapra had 0.133 milligram of arsenic.

Besides in tubewell of Kushtia Ali of Bheramara 0.694 milligram of arsenic was found, in Natun hat 0.242 milligram in tubewell of Asadul was 0.915 milligram, highest ever was found.

The Executive Engineer also recommended for collecting sample of water from least 15 tubewells in every union.

It may be mentioned that presence of arsenic in one liter of water is considered tolerable up to 0.05 milligram and that is also harmful. The Executive Engineer advised not to use water from those tubewells which contain over 0.05 milligram of arsenic in one liter of water.

According to Public Health Engineering department source, arsenic poison has been found in the water of some deep tubewells in Chuadanga, Kushtia and Meherpur, and Sathkhira for laboratory tests. Arsenic has been found in large amount collected from the respective DTWs. One DTW at Chuadanga, two DTWs at Kushtia, one DTW at Meherpur and one DTW at Sathkhira have been sealed off. Thousands of the people of the districts have been affected with skin diseases due to drinking of the poisonous water.

An International seminar on Arsenic in underground water was held at Jadavpur University, Calcutta last year where the hydraulic experts have observed the burning issue. The lives of one crore people of the eight border districts in Bangladesh have been threatened due to intake of water containing arsenic supplied from water tanks of the concerned Poushavara.

According to experts, arsenic is coming out due to lifting of underground water by DTWs. They have suggested protective measures to maintain underground water layer.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY : Prof M Eusuff Ali, RU VC addressing at the opening ceremony of Summer Science Training Course on September 7 at Physics Gallery of the University.

— Star photo

## Health complexes in Bandarban beset with various problems

BANDARBAN, Sept 13: Health Complexes in the seven thanas of the district including sadar hospital are beset with manifold problems, patients complained, reports UNB.

Many patients alleged that they are not getting proper treatment as physicians are inadequate and medicine scarce in the complexes.

Outdoor patients of the sadar hospital are stated to be the worst sufferers although yearly allocation of fund continues uninterrupted.

District Civil Surgeon informed that the government allotted Tk 26.82 lakh for buying medicine and surgical equipment last fiscal year. Of the amount, Tk 18.77 lakh was spent for buying medicine.

Besides, he said, a lion's share of the allotted money had to be spent for combating large scale outbreak of malaria in the district this year.

The government had undertaken a project for distributing medicated mosquito-nets among the poor people of the malaria prone areas of the hill districts.

Local Government Parishad Chairman told UNB that the project, which stopped halfway would restart soon.

## Illegal cross-border movements, smuggling continue

BANDARBAN, Sept 13: Smuggling and unauthorised cross-border movement continue unabated in the border areas of Nykhongchhari thana of the district, reports UNB.

According to local sources, measures are yet to be taken to build border road outposts and customs offices which are es-

sential for controlling illegal activities along with international border with Myanmar.

Since independence several crore taka were allotted for the development of four hill districts but a border road could not be constructed as yet.

On the other side, the Myanmar government has constructed 1.500 kilo metres border roads in that country's Rakhain region.

The sources said important commodities like urea fertiliser are being smuggled across Raikong and Tumbri hilly areas and smuggling in and out of the country is increasing despite the government of huge amount of revenue.

Local people alleged that the people who often go to frontier areas for collecting wood, bamboo and cane feel insecure in the absence of border outposts.

Between August 27 and 31, nine woodcutters were abducted, four killed and four others injured in an explosion planted by the Myanmar border force, Nasa.

It is suspected that some corrupt officials of the mill in connivance with the suppliers received less than specified in the supply order and misappropriated the excess money.

## 500 maunds of jute reported missing

NARSINGDI, Sept 13: About 7500 maunds of jute worth Tk 38.53 lakh were reported missing from Ghorashal godown of Bangladesh Jute Mills in Polash thana, reports UNB.

Officials of the BJMC said 2.50 lakh maunds of jute had been bought in the fiscal year 1995-96, according to the purchase register, but the stock was detected short by 7500 maunds recently.

It is suspected that some corrupt officials of the mill in connivance with the suppliers received less than specified in the supply order and misappropriated the excess money.

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The district law and order committee has proposed for setting up customs check posts in the Nykhongchhari border areas.

## Husband allegedly beats wife to death

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 13: A young housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Hajipara village in Raiganj thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said Saleha Khatun, 22, mother of two, was severely beaten up by her husband Anwar Hossain as she failed to bring dowry money from her father.

Anwar Hossain went into hiding soon after the incident.

The body was buried after autopsy at Sirajganj General Hospital. A case was filed with Raiganj thana.

## Rival group takes revenge

### Six houses looted, 23 women beaten

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Sept 13: At least six houses were looted and 23 women including a pregnant one beaten up mercilessly at Ishwardi village under Nagarjana police station by rival group on September 9 in the morning following the death of one Moazzel of the same village who was fatally injured in a clash between two rival groups over a trivial matter on September 6, according to police and witnesses sources.

In a critical condition Moazzel was rushed to Nagarjana hospital where from he was referred to Dhaka. He succumbed to his injuries on September 8 in Dhaka.

Two cases were lodged with Nagarjana police in these connections. Police investigation is going on. None was arrested till the writing of this report on Wednesday.

## Property worth Tk 20 lakh gutted

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 13: Property worth about Taka 20 lakh was gutted when a fire broke out in Tarail Plot High School at Tarail Thana Headquarters, fire brigade sources said.

The fire which originated due to electric short circuit gutted the science laboratory, office-room, library and auditorium of the school alongwith all furnitures. After being informed through wireless message, the fire brigade personnel of Kishoreganj immediately started for the spot, but they could not reach there in time due to the pitiable condition of the road. It was learnt.

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## 15,000 children suffering from malnutrition in Patuakhali

PATUAHALI, Sept 13: About 15,000 children of six thanas in the district have been suffering from malnutrition, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the number of affected children is increasing day by day in different areas of the district specially in char and coastal areas.

According to the sources, poverty of rural people is mainly responsible for the increasing malnutrition. The poor people cannot provide nutritious foods to their children.

About 75 per cent people in the district are dependent on agriculture. But the agricultural productions are affected by natural calamities, high prices of fertilizers, want of bullocks and non-availability of loans.

The farmers have to borrow money at high rate of interest from local landlords by mortgaging their small holdings, which are usually confiscated for non-payment or sold away for repayment of loans and interest.

Agricultural loans from authorised financial institutions are hardly available because of corruption, irregularity and procedural bottlenecks, they said.

It was also alleged that a section of unscrupulous employees in collaboration with local touts harass the farmers who refuse to pay baya.

The farmers of the district have urged the government to streamline the loan disbursement procedure.

## Number of landless people increases

NETROKONA, Sept 13: The number of landless people, particularly farmers, has been increasing fast in all the 10 thanas of the district due to a variety of reasons, reports UNB.

Leading farmers said the reasons included natural calamity, high prices of fertilizer, want of bullocks and non-availability of loans.

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## 300mt of wheat sanctioned for rural infrastructural development

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Sept 13: A total of 300 metric tons of wheat of have been sanctioned for each of the five constituencies of the district under Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Programme, according to official source.

The source when contacted told this correspondent that the programme will be implemented in the ensuing dry season under the direct supervision of the respective MP.

Besides, 100 metric tons of wheat have been allocated for each of the constituencies under village maintenance project during this current rainy season, the source added.

Moreover, a sum of Taka 13 lakh 79 thousand and 340 bundles of CI sheet have also been allocated as house building grant to be distributed among the flood and river erosion affected people of Sadar, Char Bhadrashan, Sadarpur and Bhangana thanas in the district, the source informed.

## Earning from fish export may fall by Tk 200 cr in next fiscal : Shatish

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Sept 13: Shree Shatish Chandra Roy, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock has said that fish policy would be formulated soon with a view to boost the fish production in the country.

Shree Shatish was inaugurating a day-long workshop on 'Breeding problems regarding fish fry and fish resources' at Rajshahi University senate hall on September 8 last organised by Fisheries Directorate, Rajshahi Division.

The State Minister said that export earning from fish may decline by Tk 200 crore in coming fiscal year as the recently detected 'white spot' disease of shrimp is alarming. State Minister further said that Gold, Silver and Bronze medal would be awarded to the best fishermen and organisation from the current year for the outstanding contribution to the field of fisheries.

Mizanur Rahman Minu, Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation has said that concerted

## Case filed against RU authority

RAJSHAHI, Sept 13: A case was filed on behalf of some students of Rajshahi University against the authorities recent decision to cancel the admission of 36 students, reports UNB.

Three students — Farzana Khaled, Tamanna Yasmin and Farhana Yasmin — filed the case with the Senior Assistant Judge against the university's Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Dean of Arts Faculty.

According to the petition, some 36 students were admitted in the first year honours classes for the 1996-97 academic session prepared on the result of admission test.

A student organisation demonstrated against the decision of the university authorities which ordered a halt to the admission process and announced new dates for repeat interview, the plaintiffs said.

This decision, they said, was illegal, unfair and taken in violation of university rules, without any inquiry.

## 25 shops gutted in Habiganj

HABIGANJ, Sept 13: Twenty-five shops were gutted in a devastating fire at Jagadishpur Bazar in Madhabpur thana on Wednesday night, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the fire originated from a tea-stall at about 1 am and quickly spread to the adjacent areas burning down properties.

## Flood situation improves in C' nawabganj

From N S M Mahbubur Rahman

Nawabganj and Shibganj and Nawabganj and Rajshahi still remains suspended. Most of the institutions of Nawabganj sadar, Shibganj, Gomostapur, and Bhalahat thanas have been remaining closed as they are occupied by the flood affected people. The cost of the everyday necessities has been very high due to long term disruption of communication.

The sufferings of all classes of people along with flood victims has been very critical. Only five thousand 2 hundred 99 people could avail chance to take shelter in 25 centres opened by the government.

The rest of the houseless people have taken shelter in various educational institutions and other self-made shelters on the high lands, embankments and road sides. Most of the working class people of the district have been remaining jobless and starving for days together. After the visit of the Food, Agriculture, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury to the flood affected areas of the district the relief programmes have been geared up by the district administration. Of course, the minister could not distribute any relief during her visit to the affected areas allegedly because there was no master-roll made by the district

## National

# Affected people not getting sufficient relief

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One learnt while visiting some affected areas that relief does not reach those who are remaining at their own lands under the open sky. It is alleged that relief often does not reach the right people.

The condition of the people living in the char areas like Sunderpur, Charbagdanga, Narayanganj, Alatull, Islampur, Devinagar, Char Onupnagar, Shahijahanpur, Panka, Uzirpur, Durlapur, Manakasha is the worst. People of those areas have been leading a very miserable life due to acute crisis of food, drinking water and fuel.

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