

## Water crisis in city will ease next month

The water crisis in Dhaka city will ease considerably next month with completion of 19 additional pumps, WASA officials assured yesterday, reports UNB.

The new pump stations would add 6.65 crore litre of water everyday to the existing supply of 96 crore litre taking the total supply to over 102 crore litre. The demand is, however, estimated at 140 crore litre, said an official.

He said overall water supply situation is not that bad and the water production is now higher than last year's 85 crore litre during this time.

The new 19 pump stations are being installed at Motijheel, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Sabujbag, Ramna and Tejgaon thanas.

The official said availability

of water to common man declined as the demand by high-rise buildings increased sharply. He denied erratic power supply was affecting operation of pump stations. Some 48 generators are there to keep the pump stations running in case of power failures. Stand by generators will also be provided to the new pump stations, said the official.

One hundred high-powered generators will be available under the Swedish assistance which will reach Bangladesh next month. WASA will purchase another 120 generators, and the deal is under process.

He said WASA also decided to undertake a pilot project to supply water for purposes other than drinking from Turag river.

## ECNEC okays 9 projects involving Tk 443.87 crore

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for construction of reservoirs beside all establishments to preserve rainwater to supply arsenic-free water to the people, reports UNB.

Presiding over a (ECNEC) meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council, which endorsed some water-supply projects among others, she also stressed the need for using surface water in order to avert the dangers of arsenic contamination.

The ECNEC meeting approved a total of nine projects involving an estimated cost of Tk 443.87 crore, including Tk 150.46 crore in project aid.

The approved schemes are: Amirkpur-Badhartek-Ballabanda, construction of small bridges and culverts (up to 40 feet) under the food-for-works programme, installation of digital telephone exchanges in Sreepur, Kapasia and Kaliganj thana headquarters in Gazipur district, construction of RCC bridge over Bhalrab

## Allegations refuted

Managing Director of Royal Tour of Khulna, Md Faruq, in a rejoinder to a news item Bagerhat SP refuses to accept case: Discovery camera crew assaulted by hoodlums in Sundarbans published in The Daily Star on Mar 3, has termed the allegations as false, baseless and motivated.

In the rejoinder he said: "The allegation made in the news item that a group of seven men led by one Faruq boarded MV Chhutti, Stationed at forest station at Katka on Feb 24 and assaulted the crews on board including one Munsoor and also attempted to hit one Mike Herd, a wildlife camera man from the America's Discovery channel filming a documentary on tigers in the Sunderbans, is not correct. No such things happened at all at Katka on that date."

"On 24 Feb '99 MV Chhutti of The Guide Tour Ltd And ML Royal Gondola of Royal Tour along with three other vessels carrying tourist passengers anchored at Katka. A total of about 400 people were visiting Katka on that date. No body knows about such alleged incidents there."

"In the afternoon our tourists with country boat went round the Sunderbans in the canal and during this time Rubait Munsoor and Mike Herd with a high powered speed boat chased our tourist boat at Katka canal and got photographs of them which is very illegal. During this time our country boat was about to sink due to rough water and rolling. This was strongly protested by me and my guests. And Rubait Munsoor and Mike Herd approached me with some empty beehives canes with the plea that they were thrown into the canal from my vessel and they were polluting the Sunderbans. We informed them gently that those canes were not of us and they might be thrown from any other vessel stationed there at Katka. After this, they left us with angry mood and telling that they would give us proper lesson in time."

The talk of Godfather and attempt to shoot deer is also baseless, concocted and motivated. I am not at all aware of such things. I also make it clear that I have no relation with any kind of terrorist activities and there is no such record in any police station anywhere in Bangladesh."

"While talking to the reporter of The Daily Star, after the incident, I clearly explained my position to him about the incident."

"It may be mentioned here that about one and half months ago, while I was at Katka, I found that six cows were brought there by Herd for use as food of tigers for getting photographs and I told them whether they had any permission to bring such dying cows and shoot them and after death throw them in the Sunderbans for use as food of tigers, and whether this activities are allowed by wildlife regulations. He could not give satisfactory reply to me and since then he is maintaining enemical relation with us."

The Guide Tour Ltd, owner of MV Chhutti, has the business jealousy against the Royal Tour and, as a result, they have used Mike Herd and his people against me and my business firm - the Royal Tour so that our good name and fame in tourist business in Sunderbans are jeopardized. Mike maintains very cordial relations with the owner of the guide Tour Ltd. Ahsan Mansoor, Rubait Munsoor, claimed to be the Assistant of Mike is actually the son of the owner of this Guide Tour Ltd. And Rubait Munsoor, has created this news and such acts of them and sending of letters to British High Commission and to different ministries has lowered my business goodwill and my personal social position and prestige."

She urged the people to prepare for a tougher movement after the Eid-ul-Azha. "We will launch a one-point movement if the government fails to meet our demands and resolve the problems facing the people and the country," she added.

More than 200 leaders and workers of district Jatiya Party led formally joined BNP at the meeting.

those, she added.

She also said the former home minister was not allowed to work independently and instructions always came from the Prime Minister's Office and some other influential men.

Begum Zia said that in the last three years, the government completely destroyed the country. All democratic institutions, universities and colleges, and examination system were ruined due to politicisation and nepotism of the ruling party.

She said rape, murder, extortion and all other criminal activities are now a regular feature in the country as the government is directly patronising and rewarding AL criminals.

On the collapse of Feni stadium, she said it collapsed as the construction work was going on without any tender and there was corruption.

Khaleda in her 30-minute speech also listed 'failures' of the government in different sectors, destruction of industries, lawlessness, price hike of essentials, falsehood of the government, corruption, nepotism and terrorism.

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## Weather

### Dry weather forecast

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country during the next 12 hours till 6pm today, reports APB.

Day temperature may rise during the period across the country, Met Office said.

The country's lowest temperature yesterday was 15.7 degrees Celsius recorded at Rangamati while the highest was 36.8 degrees at Jessor.

The sun sets today at 5:58 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:57 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures, and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday.

| City/Town   | Temperature in Celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |         |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
|             | Min                    | Max  | Morning                | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 21.4                   | 35.2 | 77                     | 44      |
| Chittagong  | 21.0                   | 31.7 | 77                     | 76      |
| Rajshahi    | 17.0                   | 36.2 | 63                     | 41      |
| Khulna      | 23.2                   | 34.7 | 84                     | 46      |
| Barisal     | 20.5                   | 33.8 | 85                     | 68      |
| Sylhet      | 20.4                   | 34.5 | 62                     | 53      |
| Cox's Bazar | 21.5                   | 33.0 | 77                     | 80      |

### SEMP Workshop on Arsenic Contamination of Groundwater of Bangladesh

Organized jointly by Ministry of Environment and Forum of Environmental Journalists at National Press Club, Dhaka.

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