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PHOTO: STAR

The Dhakabasi Sangathan, an organisation of the residents of Dhaka city, arranged an exhibition of delicious seasonal fruits at Motijheel in the city yesterday.

## Local arsenic test kit developed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A local pharmaceutical company has developed a cost-effective, user-friendly arsenic field test kit.

This was claimed by the manufacturer of the kit, General Pharmaceutical Ltd (GPL), at a press conference in the city yesterday.

The kit, containing various reagents, chemicals and outfit for testing the presence of arsenic concentration in tubewell water or any sample of drinking water, is the first of its kind developed using local technology.

"It is simple, easy to use and has no hazard and it has been developed completely using local

technology," claimed Dr Momenul Haq, managing director of GPL.

The kit, an improved version of its older model, has been recently developed and can test one hundred samples on the site wherever the tubewell is located and the result is instantly given.

"The lowest range of arsenic, the kit can test, is 10 parts per billion (ppb) and the highest is 3,000 ppb and each test will roughly cost Tk 22 to 25," said Mir Zaki Azam Chowdhury, marketing manager of GPL.

He said each kit will cost around Tk 2,300 compared to imported portable kits whose cost range is Tk 2,800 and above.

"As part of our research and accuracy we have conducted 2,500 sample tests which were more or less accurate and to verify our results we had sent samples to Atomic Energy Commission for validation. The results were satisfactory," said Chowdhury.

"The kit provides an easy method of screening water for arsenic right at home or in the field. You can get instant results. By identifying arsenic in water, you can avoid the risks of lung and skin cancer," said Dr Haq.

The company will introduce the kit, which is comparable to any portable arsenic kit in the world, in the market on commercial basis in about three months' time, the manufacturers claimed.

It can be used nearly anywhere — in natural waters, groundwater, and drinking water. Using prepared reagents and indicator test strips, the new arsenic test kit allows to screen water for arsenic concentration without the delay of sending samples to laboratory.

The test takes just 20 minutes, using a pretreated cotton wool to overcome any sulfide interference. Exposure to chemical reaction is minimised.

Operators can visually compare the kit's reacted test strip against various colour-standard steps from 10 to 3000 ppb.

"The advantage of the kit is that it has only two steps for testing water samples and unlike the previous model where liquid acid was used, the new kit has solid acid to avoid any risk of spillage or damage to skin while testing," said Dr Haq.

## Turkish envoy calls on Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Erding Ulumlu called on Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday and discussed various bilateral issues.

During the hour-long meeting, the envoy congratulated Hasina for extending cordial cooperation during her government's tenure.

He praised her government's notable success in the fields of agriculture, power, education, old-age allowance and other initiatives to alleviate poverty.

Erding Ulumlu hoped the existing friendly relations between Bangladesh and Turkey would develop in the days to come.

The opposition leader hoped that the relations that have been developed between the two governments and the peoples of two countries during her period would continue to grow in the future.

## Former minister Momin hospitalised

BSS, Dhaka

Former education minister Advocate Momin Uddin Ahmed was admitted to Comfort Hospital in the city yesterday with acute kidney ailment, family sources said.

Advocate Momin, a former ambassador, is now under the treatment of kidney specialist Prof Abdus Salam.

He requested the countrymen to pray for his early recovery.

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