

## City to run short of around 60 crore litres a day in March-June

MIZANUR KHAN

Dhaka residents are likely to face acute water crisis this summer, as the demand will increase 10 percent and the groundwater level will dip further.

The Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) identified Mirpur, Kuril Badda, Goran, Sabujbagh, Mugda, Lalbagh, Nawabganj, Dhanmondi and Rayer Bazar as crisis-prone areas after mapping last week. Some of the areas are already experiencing water shortage.

"The residents, especially in Mirpur, will have to brace for a severe water shortage because of groundwater depletion," said ANH Akhter Hossain, Wasa managing director.

The output of tubewell water in the areas is also not the same as before and many tubewells have remained inoperative for long.

Wasa officials said the daily shortfall would increase from 50 crore litres to 60 crore litres in March-June.

Wasa that depends on groundwater for 85 percent of the demand and surface water for the rest now supplies 150 crore litres of water to 1.25 crore residents who need around 200 crore litres a day.

"The daily water demand is 160 litres a person. But the output decreases in summer as the groundwater level in Dhaka has climbed two to three metres down over the years," Akhter Hossain said.

The daily output may come down to 140 crore litres of water in March-June -- 10 crore litres less than in other months.

The Wasa managing director told Star City that inoperative tubewells, a drastic fall in output from two major water treatment plants in Sayedabad and Chadnighat and power cuts worsened the situation.

Wasa, taking some measures to check the shortfall, installed 30 new tubewells across the city last year and will sink another 21 by April. It also decided to set up another 12 tubewells in the crisis-prone areas.

To ensure steady water supply in Mirpur, Wasa introduced deep-aquifer-tubewells that can extract water from more than 1,000 feet underground.

Wasa will supply water to the residents of populous areas in its small vehicles. "Our big cars cannot move in many places. We will use small carriers that can move in narrow streets," Akhter Hossain said, adding authorities have no plan to call army out to tackle the water crisis this summer.



EVERETT ROBERTSON

## CITY CORRESPONDENT

Mysterious plots have surfaced on filled up land of the Gulshan-Baridhara-Banani Lake.

About four years ago the Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (Rajuk) decided to put an end to encroachment of the lake. Rajuk's engineers then designed a project for building a walkway along the water body. The idea was to put an end to illegal occupation of the lake's area for residential plots.

Rajuk later filled up a sizeable portion along the lake for the proposed walkway.

Although a part of the walkway project has been implemented elsewhere, most of the filled up area along Road No. 26 across Banani however has mysteriously become residential plots. The occupiers on those portions have set up slums and purpose of the occupation can be easily understood.

The slum dwellers said that they have been paying regular rent to the owners of the plots.

"We do not know the name of the landlord but a person named Tajul comes to us every week to collect the rent on behalf of the plot owners," said Mohammad Nuru Miah. Nuru claimed that he pays Tk 100 per

week for a single hut.

When inquired, Rajuk chairman Iqbaluddin Choudhury told this correspondent that only one plot was allocated in the area in question "long ago". He said there was no question of fresh allocation by the lake in Gulshan, Banani or Baridhara.

"One plot was allocated on the same spot several years ago. The remaining space along the lake would be converted into a walkway," Choudhury said. When it was brought to his notice that there was no land left to complete the walkway because of the occupation, Choudhury instructed his officials to look into the matter urgently.

The Rajuk chairman informed that in Banani Chairmanbari area Rajuk recently recovered 20 bighas of land from the Industries Ministry. Sometime back the ministry was allocated 40 bighas son which they built just two structures.

"We have reclaimed half of that land and soon we will convert them into plots and sell them to the public through proper official procedure," said Choudhury.

It may be mentioned that successive governments have allocated plots by filling up lakes of the city in the name of building walkways.

Air Commodore (Retd.) Kamaluddin Ahmed sent a rejoinder to the story "Cheated, devastated" published on February 23 in Star City, rejecting the claims of fraudulence made by Maksuda Bari Rosy.

It said the petition case Rosy filed with CMM's court is entirely false.

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The rejoinder said Miss Maksuda Bari Rosy was introduced to Rashida Kamal, wife of Kamaluddin Ahmed by her younger sister who said Rosy was a distant relative of her husband. She requested Rashida Kamal to arrange a marriage for Miss Rosy who was apparently helpless.

Ahmedullah Kamal, son of Rashida and Kamaluddin is an Imam of the Islamic Center Nashville in Tennessee, U.S.A. Ahmedullah Kamal was approached by an American, Tracy Easley, who had converted to Islam and taken the name Mostafa Abdullah in order to marry into a Muslim family, preferably in a Muslim country. Ahmedullah's family just negotiated the marriage between Rosv and Abdullah.

The rejoinder included a reproduction of a letter written by Mostafa Abdullah showing that Imam Ahmedullah Kamal did not get involved in the intricacy of the marriage.

It may be mentioned that Rosy's allegation in the original story that Kamal's family took Tk 200,000 from her was strongly denied by him. However, he added that Mostafa Abdullah said through his letter that he received 1000 US dollars from Rosy through Ahmedullah Kamal to buy the air ticket to Dhaka and had already returned US \$ 600 to her through Western Union. It also added that Mostafa will send 400 US dollars soon.

## SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

A man tries to re-build his hut, others line up for relief while a family sits by the open-air kitchen at Bau Bazar slum in Gulshan yesterday. A blaze burnt alive five including four children and gutted 5,000 shanties making over 25,000 homeless on Friday. Many of the victims are still living under the open sky.