

REMOVAL OF ARSENIC FROM WATER

'Household filtration is cost-effective'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Household filtration process to remove arsenic from groundwater has proved cost-effective and easy to use, said the speakers at a day-long roundtable yesterday.

They said the household filtration process costs less than Tk 240 for a family of about four people a year.

The speakers pointed out that in practice community-based arsenic removal plants like harvesting of rainwater and pond-sand filters are not popular because of technical reasons.

On the other hand, the low cost filters have already proved acceptable and popular during the field-testing, they added.

The speakers said removal of arsenic from three different types of water by oxidation and co-precipitation methods has proved very effective.

After filtration, contamination level almost comes down to zero, said the experts studying the filters at field level.

"We want to find a meaningful, practical and cost-effective solution to the arsenic problem," said Nasrin

R Karim, director general of an NGO Earth Identity Project that organised the roundtable titled 'Dhaka Water': Policy, Strategy, and Dialogue.

During the briefing session, Unicef officials informed that out of 464 upazilas, 265 have been identified as 'hot spots' where more than 60 percent tubewell water is contaminated.

"Epidemiology of the arsenic is still uncertain. In same family one member is seen to have serious effect from drinking contaminated water while others drinking from the same source have no effect at all," they added.

"It is not understood yet but we have a big challenge ahead," said Naseem-ur-Rahman, chief of information and advocacy section of Unicef.

Paul Edwards, head of water and sanitation of Unicef, Dr Han Heijnen, head of environment department of WHO, Enayeturrahman Khan, editor of the New Age, Khoda Bux, director of Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project and Unicef officials from West Bengal spoke at the roundtable supported

by Embassy of Finland, Unicef and DFID.

The roundtable was a follow up of the roundtable titled 'Arsenic Crisis Today-Strategy for Tomorrow' held in July, 2001.

PREGNANCY-RELATED COMPLICATIONS 'Over 14,000 mothers die a year'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 14,000 mothers die a year in the country due to pregnancy-related complications, said UNFPA Country Representative Suneeta Mukherjee at the closing ceremony of a workshop yesterday.

She said reproductive health situation of mothers is still at a deplorable state despite good progress in the health delivery system.

Suneeta pointed out that high preference for boy child is one of the reasons for high total fertility rate (TFR).

She said men will have to play the vital role to change this attitude to improve the population situation.

The two-day workshop on Gender, Reproductive health and Environment issues was jointly organised by UNFPA, Department of Mass Communication and Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).

A total of 30 journalists from across the country participated in the workshop.

Speakers at the workshop said the country's population is increasing fast owing to stagnating TFR at 3.3 percent for the last ten years.

They termed the increase a major obstacle to development.

Information Secretary AMM Nasiruddin was the chief guest and Director General of mass communication department Iftakhar Hossain the special guest of the closing ceremony. Director General of PIB Rezwana Hossain Siddique was also present.

'Introduce uniform family code to ensure women's rights'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Introduction of a uniform family code is a must so women of all faiths can enjoy equal rights in their family, speakers said at a seminar in the city yesterday.

They also called for raising awareness among the people and more campaigns before the formation of the family code to avert complaints from different religious communities.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised the seminar to exchange views with the representatives of different religions on the proposed uniform family code.

The Parishad has been trying to form the family code in line with the 'Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)', the organisers said.

The uniform family code will mainly deal with marriage and divorce registration, guardianship of the children, women rights to the assets, child adoption and subsistence after divorce.

Chaired by Hena Das, president of the Mahila Parishad, the seminar was conducted by Aeyesha Khanam, secretary general of the Parishad.

Chitra Bhattacharya, Kazal Devnath, Hiralal Barua, Advocate Kostin Perera, Susanta Kumar Das, and Advocate Masuda Rehana Begum spoke at the seminar.



PHOTO: STAR

The University of Development Alternative organised a seminar on 'Role of private universities in improving quality of education' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. From left are Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk, UODA Vice-Chancellor Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam.

Don't make university a moneymaking machine

Speaker urges pvt varsities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday urged the private university authorities to impart quality education.

"Don't establish a university as a moneymaking machine but aim at raising the much-needed standard of education," said Sircar while address-

ing a students-teachers-parents conference organised by University of Development Alternative (UODA) at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, Jute and Textile Minister Shajahan Siraj, Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk and Chairman of

University Grants Commission (UGC) Dr M Asaduzzaman attended the function as special guests.

Founder and President of the UODA Mujib Khan presented a keynote paper titled 'Role of Private Universities of Bangladesh in Education Development' at the function presided over by UODA Vice-Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed.

Sircar called on the private university authorities to run the show with full-time permanent faculty members.

"Appoint permanent full-time teachers for the sake of standard education as teachers shuttling between public and private universities cannot impart quality education," he added.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk said the government is considering to allow overseas universities to establish their campus in the country to supplement higher education.

He said this will enable our students to have standard education at an affordable fees.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam expressed concern over the nosedive situation in the country's education sector.

He, however, praised the forward-looking idea of the prime minister to allow universities in private sector to supplement the public universities.

Replying to a request by the UODA authorities to provide M Phil and doctoral degree, UGC chairman said education ministry may consider the issue since the university has the capability.

Mujib Khan in his keynote paper urged the authorities concerned to ensure minimal standard of higher education at reasonable fees.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said UODA is committed to impart quality education for the development of the country.

Earlier, the university authorities distributed crest among some students for their outstanding achievements in different fields.

DHAKA TODAY

Cuban film show

Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen three Cuban films titled 'Havana Suite' (2003) by Fernando Perez, 'Life is to Whistle' (1998) by Fernando Perez and 'Memories of Underdevelopment' (1968) by Tomas Gutierrez Alea. Venue: Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm, 5.15pm and 7.15pm.

Academy film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Dreamcatcher' (2003). Venue: Society auditorium, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Publication ceremony

Subarna Sangket organises the publication ceremony of a novel titled 'Pantha Priya' by Rashedul Hasan Shelly. It will be followed by a musical soiree. Venue: Sufia Kamal auditorium, National Museum. Time: 4.30pm.

BIISS discussion

A discussion on '14th Lok Sabha elections in India and the unfolding security scenario in South Asia', organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), will be held. Venue: BIISS auditorium, Elephant Road. Time: 10.00am.

Health workshop

A national workshop on 'School health and nutrition' organised jointly by the health ministry and Save the Children USA, will be held. Venue: BRAC Centre Inn, Mohakhali. Time: 9.00am.

Arsenic seminar

Narigrantha Prabartana organises a dissemination seminar on 'Arsenic and its impact on women'. Venue: Prabartana, Mohammadpur. Time: 4.00pm.

Founding anniversary

The 15th founding anniversary of Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall of Dhaka University will be celebrated with Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz as chief guest. Venue: Hall auditorium. Time:

6.30pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Sufi Mojilish organises a discussion to mark the holy Eid-e-Miladun Nabi (SA) with Justice Sultan Hossain Khan as chief guest. Venue: Kachi Kancha auditorium, Segun Bagicha. Time: 9.30am.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Cuban film show

Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen three Cuban films titled 'Nothing More' (2001) by Juan Carlos Cremata, 'Strawberry and Chocolate' (1993) by Tomas Gutierrez Alea and 'Guantanamo' (1996) by Juan Carlos Tabio. Venue: Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm, 5.15pm and 7.15pm.

Academy film show

Academy Film Society will screen an Indian film titled 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam' (2000), and two American films titled 'Thirteen' (2003) and 'Vampires' (1975). Venue: Society auditorium, Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm, 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

Roundtable

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organises a roundtable on 'Socio-economic development and peace' with Advisor to foreign ministry Reaz Rahman as chief guest. Venue: BILIA auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am.

Seminar

A seminar on the 'Implications of financial globalisation for Bangladesh', organised by Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), will be held. Venue: BIBM Bhaban, Mirpur. Time: 3.00pm.

Rally

Dhaka University Debating Society organises a rally to mark the Third National Debate Festival. Venue: Teachers Students Centre. Time: 10.30am.

Govt forced JP to back amendment to constitution

Hasina tells newly elected poura chairmen

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the freedom of expression fled the country as the government "forced" Jatiya Party to support the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

She said the people expressed their 'no-confidence' in the BNP-Jamaat coalition government showing their support to anti-government movement and they now want resignation of the government and a free and fair election.

The Awami League President was speaking at party's Dhanmondi office in the afternoon when two newly elected Poursava chairmen M Ali Chowdhury of Rajbari and Shamsul Alam Duda of Panchbibi (Joypurhat) called on her.

Hasina said that despite the alliance government's repressive measures during the municipal polls, the AL-supported candidates won the election at many places, defying threat and intimidation.

"If they had not taken the path of violence and vote rigging, the alliance-backed candidates would not be able to win even a single seat," she said.

Hasina castigated the government for what she said poor law-and-order situation, price hike of essentials and government's inefficiency in curbing the price spirals, political killing, torture, repression on women, children and journalists and violation of human rights.

She called upon the people to unitedly resist "torture and repression by BNP-Jamaat regime".

Party leaders Abdul Jalil MP, Kazi Jafar Ullah MP, Motia Chowdhury and Col (rtd) Faruk Khan MP were present.

Robbery in Ctg city house

UNB, Chittagong

Gunmen looted gold ornaments worth Tk 3 lakh and Tk 35,000 in cash from a house at Chanmari road in the city early yesterday.

Mahbub Alam and others were preparing for Fazr prayers when 4-5 armed robbers forced into the house, tied all inmates with rope and took away the cash and valuables.



PHOTO: PID

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca called on Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman at secretariat yesterday.