

New device to detect arsenic level below 10 microgram

It's simple and cheaper, scientists say

AMANUR AMAN, from Kushtia

A new, simple and cheaper method to detect arsenic level in water has been evolved in Kushtia by a group of foreign scientists.

The team was led by a Kushtia-born scientist, now a citizen of Canada.

Arsenic level less than 10 microgram per litre (ug/L) can be measured by using the method while those now used being in the country can not detect the contamination if it is below 50 microgram per litre.

The World Health Organization (WHO)-prescribed tolerable limit of arsenic in water for humans is 10 microgram per litre.

Thousands of people are being affected in the country with the deadly poison as they are unknowingly taking water with arsenic contamination of around 50 microgram per litre.

The new method is more accurate and precise and does not need use of atomic absorption spectrometer or other expensive equipment, according to the innovators.

In the 'arsenomolybdate' method arsenic can be detected by using a simple spectrophotometer, distillation unit for purifying water, analytical balance, top-loading balance, glassware, an arsine generator, scrubber and absorber and some very common reagents. All these cost Tk 6500 only while the methods now being used cost around Tk 37,000. Dr. Bibudhendra Sarkar, leader of team of foreign scientists, told this correspondent recently.

Any household or a small community can set up a small laboratory, which will open a new dimension in supply of arsenic-free water, he said.

The innovation has been made after eight year's experiment in four Kushtia villages by volunteer scientists called Scientists Without Borders, headed by Dr Bibudhendra Sarkar of the Hospital for Sick Children and Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Canada.

The team included Dr Seth Frisbe, an environmental chemist, Dr Ericka Michel, a sociologist from Better Life Laboratories in Vermont, USA, Dr Donald Manyard of Johnson Company, Vermont, USA, Dr, Saul Sanchez, of Green

Mountain Laboratories, Vermont USA; Dr Richard Ortega of University of Bordeaux, France and Ahmad Zaki Yusuf and Mohammad Yusuf Siddique of BANI, Kushtia.

They worked by rotation in Bualda, Fulbari, Komlapur and Jamjami villages.

Recently, Dr Mustanzid of the Department of Surgery, Faridpur Medical College and Dr Fatema Ashraf, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Rajshahi Medical College, joined the team.

Talking to this correspondent, Dr Mustanzid said they are now help-

ing some individuals and small companies providing healthcare service in Kushtia to install small laboratories in the town. Gradually this will be expanded throughout the country.

Kushtia is one of the districts where the groundwater is highly contaminated with arsenic.

At least 63 per cent of the people in the district are facing the danger, according to a survey made by a foreign NGO in 2002.



Dr. B Sarkar (sitting left), along with Dr Fatema Ashraf and Dr SM Mustanzid, explaining to people the new method to detect arsenic in water at Golapnagar village in Bheramara upazila in Kushtia district.

STAR FILE PHOTO

Khulna BNP leader sued for extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Yusuf Haroon Majnu, a prominent leader of Khulna BNP and organising secretary of Rupsha Bus Owners' Association, has filed a case against party leader and ward commissioner Md Amanullah Aman and 11 others for alleged toll collection and terrorist activities.

The case was filed on Sunday with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court under sections 4 and 5 of the Speedy Trial Act.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate has ordered judicial probe by First Class Magistrate M M Shelina Begum, asking her to submit a report by August 7.

Boy abducted to press for ransom in Meherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals abducted a school boy after committing robbery in a house and demanded ransom for his release.

The incident took place at Kuthibhatpara village in Gangni upazila in Meherpur district early yesterday. At least 20 persons were also injured when the gang hurled bombs on them when neighbours tried to resist the criminals.

According to police, a gang of 14 stormed into the house Rafiqul Islam and confined family members at gunpoint. They demanded Tk

50,000. Being refused, they looted Tk15, 000, ornaments valuables worth about Tk 50,000.

The gang at gunpoint picked up Rafiqul's son Faruk, 14, a student of class IX at Hinda High School.

The injured neighbours were admitted to Gangni Health Complex and Meherpur General Hospital. A case has been filed with Gangni police but police could not trace the boy when the report was filed yesterday afternoon.

The villagers alleged that police was informed in time but they did not go to the spot at night. They went the village in the morning.

On June 18, people at Bamundi village in the same upazila caught eight policemen when they came to commit robbery at a house. Villagers claimed that after the incident, police are not willing to move at night.

As many as 28 people, most of them school and college students and businessmen, were abducted from different places in the district since January.

Of them, 4 were killed and 21 bought their freedom after paying ransom. Two are missing. Organised gangs and outlaws are responsible for the abductions, police said.

7 get life for double murder in Dumuria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Seven persons have been sentenced to life term imprisonment and fined Tk 50,000 each for murder of BNP activists Abul Kashem alias Khokon Biswas and Yunus Gazi in Dumuria on May 9, 2003.

Twenty-nine accused were chargesheeted in the case.

Those convicted to life term are slain founder of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party (NBPC) Monoranjon Goshai alias Mrinal, Dipankar Mondol, Zakir Morol, Nasir Molla, Debu Prashad Roy alias Debu, Pravat Mondol and Tapan Basak.

Nineteen chargesheeted accused have been acquitted.

Debu Prashad Roy alias Debu and Pravat Mandol are in Khulna District Jail while the five others are absconding.

Md Abdus Samad, Judge of Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal,

delivered the verdict on Sunday.

BNP activists Abul Kashem and Yunus Gazi were abducted from a marriage ceremony at Rajapur village in Dumuria upazila of Khulna district at arms point at about 5-30 pm on May 9, 2003. They were gunned down at a place near the house of Kismat Morol of the same village.

Sub Inspector Wahidul Islam lodged an FIR with Dumuria thana as complainant on May 11 without naming any accused.

Charge sheet of the case was submitted by the IO on January 30 last year, accusing 29 persons.

The trial began on February 7 this year. Two out of 29 chargesheeted accused -- Nooruddin AL Masud and Sarwar Molongi -- were exempted from the case on March 20 this year by the High Court. Another accused -- Shukumar alias Taru -- died during trial.

Juvenile crimes on rise in Khulna

KMP worried, prepares list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) are preparing lists of juvenile delinquents.

"Juvenile delinquency is getting more attention from us as we take it as a new social menace, posing threat to law and order", said a senior official of KMP while talking to this correspondent on Sunday.

These juvenilia delinquents are being treated as 'teen aged terrorists', he said.

Preparation of ward-wise lists is going on in cooperation with intelligence agencies, he said refusing to tell the total number of teenaged terrorists to be listed.

"None of the teenaged terrorists being listed is above 16 years of age. They, of course, are not minor boys also", he said.

Police and intelligence agencies

have information that teen aged 'criminals' are running illegal drug and arms trade, being inspired by their political godfathers and in favour of fugitive terrorists.

They are at present not only involved in drug trafficking and other crimes, but also carrying arms and giving death threats for toll collection, other police sources said.

Most of these teen-aged boys are bohemian in nature and are involved mainly in drug trafficking which is a heinous crime, said Khulna Sadar thana AL Secretary and Ward Commissioner Ajmol Ahmed Tapan and Khulna district BNP Secretary and Ward Commissioner Shafiqul Alam Mona.

They have suggested stern action against the rise of teen-aged criminals. They would be used a political tools also, they said.

WIFE MURDER IN SATKHIRA

Police asked to send case to monitoring cell

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Jahanara Begum murder case lodged with Shyamnagar thana has been sent to the District Monitoring Cell for placing it on the list of sensational cases.

This has been done as per order of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) from Dhaka, police sources said here yesterday.

Jahanara Begum, 42, mother of four daughters was slaughtered on July 29 allegedly by her husband Mujibar Rahman at Ramjibanpur village as she did not agree to his desire for a second marriage.

Soon after the incident, police arrested Mujibar Rahman's two brothers--Jahangir and Shahjahan, who were also allegedly involved in the murder. But police were playing a dubious role in investigating case as the killers are the sons of a well to

do family, four daughters of the victim alleged whole talking to this correspondent Saturday night.

They said they are now hiding in a house in Dhaka as their father threatened them because they did not agree to his proposal to testify to police that their mother committed suicide. They have also filed a general diary with Mirpur thana in Dhaka, they said.

The four daughters of Mujibar rahman are Sonia, Tania, Arifa and Farzana. Two of them are married.

They said finding no alternative, they met with the IGP on Saturday at his office and sought his help. They also demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the killers. The IGP directed Shyamnagar police to send the case to the District Monitoring Cell, nab the killers and probe the case, they said.

Pirates take away 17 trawlers in Meghna

20 fishermen, crew hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

About 20 fishermen and crew were injured when armed pirates hijacked 17 fishing trawlers and looted valuable including fishing nets worth over Tk 20 lakh in the Meghna estuary in Bhola on Friday and Saturday.

Five of the injured named Manna, Mizan, Mokhes, Shamsuddin and Kamrul were recovered by fellow fishermen from the river.

Among the injured, Bashir, Abdullah and Yasin were admitted to Tazumuddin Health Complex and Jahangir Majhi, Aziz and Alamgir were admitted to Manpura Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition in the afternoon.

Pirates led by Alauddin of Bashir Bahini attacked the trawlers near

Moulbhir Char under Tazumuddin and Char Shasuddin in Manpura upazilas at about 9 on Friday night, according to victims and sources in coast guards.

The piracy continued till Saturday morning. The trawlers were owned by Kiron and Karim Dewan of Munshiganj, Jilil Sardar, Humyun Molla, Halim, Kadir, Zahir, Sikandar, Basit, Selim, Sahjahan, Bashir and Kashem Majhi, Yunus Sardar and other fish-traders of Bhola, Patuakhali and Barguna districts, victims said. The pirates demanded Tk 20,000 as ransom for release of each trawler from Hatiya area.

This way over 15 hijacked fishing trawlers were freed on payment of ransom in last two weeks, victims said.

While contacted, Coast Guard member Sikandar Ali acknowledged the fact saying miscreants escaped easily from the law enforcers some times due to non-cooperation of trawler owners and crew.

Jamaat leader Dhira on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Jamaat leader Shahab Uddin Lashkar alias Dhira was taken on remand on Sunday for two days in connection with outlaw Shiplu murder case, recorded with Khanjahan Ali thana on June 10.

Outlaw Shiplu was found dead at Shiromoni on June 8.

Dhira, also named as the mastermind behind journalist Belal murder, was arrested in Dhaka on July 5. He was brought to Khulna District Jail from Dhaka Central Jail on July 14.

He will be questioned also in connection with Belal murder case, said OC Iqbal Hossain of Khulna thana.

A school's success in SSC exam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bishaw Darbar High School secured second position among all the schools in Miressharai thana of Chittagong district in the SSC examination result.

This is because 88.88 per cent of its examinees came out successful in the examination.

Fifteen out of 18 students secured A-Grade, one student got B-Grade while another one got A minus. This is for the first time, students of the school appeared in the examination.

Training for women entrepreneurs in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A 4-day special training programme titled 'Women's Entrepreneurship Development', organised jointly by the Women For Women, an NGO and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) began in Rangamati yesterday.

This is part of programmes under Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to empower women.

The inaugural function was held at a local hotel.

Speaking on the occasion, vice president of Women for Women, Prof Jahanara Huque, welcomed the participants saying, "Now, this is time to create awareness which would help our women to become self-reliant through small entrepreneurship."

Thirty young women from different ethnic groups and the Bangalee community are taking part in the training programme. Some of them were selected as prospective entrepreneurs but they will need skill development training. Monjulika Chakma, owner of Bain Textile and involved in the programme said he will train up some of prospective women entrepreneurs.

Presided over by vice president of Women for Women, Parveen Ahmad, the simple inaugural function was also addressed by, among others, Prof Daria Noor Begum and Rashida Akter Khanam from Dhaka.

Retired vice-principal Dr Alo Rani Ayeesh, Rangamati Press Club President Sunil Kanti Dey, its former president AKM Maksud Ahmad and Rangamati Girls School Headmaster Nirupa Dewan also addressed the function.



Participants at the women's entrepreneurship training programme at Rangamati.

PHOTO: STAR

7x2

8x3



PHOTO: STAR

Members of The Daily Star Readers Club and Health Education and Agriculture Development Society, NGO, distributing fruit saplings among people in Tapadhan union in Rangpur Sadar upazila on Sunday.