

Salinity increases in groundwater

BSS, Chittagong

The work for identifying the reasons behind increase of salinity in groundwater is going on in full swing across the country.

The government launched the "Forecasting saline water intrusion, water quality and waterlogging programme" in February last year.

According to the project profile, 150` salinity test tubewells` will be installed in the coastal belts of Chittagong at a cost of Tk 3 crore.

Eighty tubewells of such kind have already been sunk and 20 more will be installed by June this year, the sources said.

Abdul Hai, assistant engineer of Minor Irrigation Information Service Wing of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC), said such kind of tubewells have been installed in Khulna, Satkhira, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Lakkhipur, Chandpur, Gopalganj, Barisal, Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Jhenidah, Magura, Rajbari, Bagerhat, Narail and Jessore.

BADC sources said such tubewells would be sunk maintaining a distance of 50 kilometers as per opinions of experts across the country, excluding the hilly areas, and the number of such tubewells might be increased to 500 to reap benefits.

Project Officer of "Forecasting saline water intrusion, water quality and waterlogging programme" and Superintendent Engineer of BADC Iftekhar Alam said the project would help identify the sources of salinity in the

ground, its impact and remedy.

He said it would also help take effective steps to save the country from the bad effects of climate change -- salinity.

"The second phase of identifying the sources of saline water will start right after we get equipment from abroad and the project is expected to be completed by December next," Iftekhar said.

"We must take preventative measures to cope with the bad effects of climate change according to geological technical guidelines so that we can get rid of salinity," he said, adding that the tubewells of Tala, Debhata and Kaliganj of Satkhira are marked with huge presence of salinity.

Iftekhar said presently the water level at Dhaka city is 140 feet under the sea level and the water level in and around Dhaka is also gradually dropping.

Abdul Huq, assistant professor of Geography and Environmental Studies Department at Chittagong University, said the reserve of the groundwater is not fulfilled due to shortfall of rain and it results in decrease of water level and increase of saline water.

However, he thought that excessive use of groundwater in daily life is also responsible for this decrease.

Crop production specialist of Agriculture Extension Department Abdul Mannan said about 11,000 hectares of land remained out of cultivation during this Boro season owing to sharp rise of salinity in the Karnaphuli river water.



Artists perform at the Meril-Prothom Alo Award giving ceremony at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Launch social movement against graft

Speakers tell Rajshahi meeting

BSS, Rajshahi

Speakers at a participatory meeting here yesterday underscored the need for forging a social movement against corruption to build a poverty-free Bangladesh.

TIB Area Manager Jeshmin Akter Panna pointed out various aspects of a corruption-free society through presenting modalities on how to curb corruption.

CCC Convener Prof Abdus Salam highlighted the organisational activities against corruption.

Former chairman of Rajshahi Education Board Prof Nurul Alam, Coordinator of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust Advocate Abdus Samad, Ward Councillor of

Citizens Committee (CCC), a partner organisation of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), organised the meeting at Rajshahi Teachers Training College conference hall.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Amin yesterday said the government would encourage private initiatives side by side with public ones to ensure quality healthcare service for the people in the country, says a press release.

Dr Afsarul Amin was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural function of a four-day education and health fair on the premises of Jashim Uddin Memorial High School in Binai Village under Khetal upazila in Joypurhat district.

Awami League Organising Secretary Abu Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapan, lawmaker Mahfuza Mandal Rina, Deputy Commissioner Abu Syed Md Hashim, founder of Hajra-Khalek Trust Dr Abdul Khalek and Dr Khalid also spoke at the programme with Dr Hajra Shirin Haq in the chair.

Dr Afsarul Amin lauded the initiative of Dr Abdul Khalek for establishing hospitals and educational institutions at a village in remote areas of Khetal.

Later, He unveiled the plaque of Shaheed Nazmul Haq Hospital and gives away crests and books to 35 students who achieved brilliant results in primary terminal examinations.

Rajshahi City Corporation Bilkish Banu, Journalist Akbarul Hassan Millat and CCC members Dr Rustam Uddin Ahmed, Dr Joydeep Bhaduri, Razendra Nath Sarker, Rajiuddin Ahmed and Kamarulla Sarker shared their views on the occasion.

The speakers said large-scale promotion of transparency and accountability in both public and private sectors could be the effective means of institutionalisation of democracy which could resist the social menace.

Emphasis should be given on ensuring commitment among respective stakeholders to deliver services and information to attain the cherished goal.



Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Amin distributes books among the students who achieved brilliant results in primary terminal examinations at Khetal upazila in Joypurhat.

JS body suggests 10 lakh-strong 'reserve force'

FROM PAGE 1

percentage of jobs in each sector, including disciplined forces, for those who will receive the training.

It believes that if the provision is introduced now, it might be possible to make one year's training mandatory for those who would apply for jobs in the army, navy, air

force, police, BDR, and coast guards after 2021.

By 2026, it might also be possible to keep half the jobs in government, semi-government and autonomous bodies reserved for people who will receive the training.

The committee believes if people with training of disciplined forces join civil services, they will be able to make much improvement.

Asked about the committee's recommendation, M Idris Ali, chief of the parliamentary body, said they unanimously made a set of recommendations to consolidate the country's defence system.

Idris, also former defence secretary, said the committee suggested strengthening of the armed forces by providing them with the required arms, vehicles, training and other logistics support.

"Undoubtedly, we need strong conventional armed forces to protect and defend our country's independence and sovereignty. But the ultimate defence will be our people. So,

we discussed how to ensure people's engagement in the defence system," he said without elaborating on any of the recommendations.

Sources in the committee said under the national service scheme a citizen will receive one year training anytime between completion of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination and before he/she reaches 30.

According to the recommendation for NRF, he/she will be provided with different types of trainings including one for military tactics. During the period of training he/she will be provided financial facilities and after the training they will get some priority in getting government jobs in various sectors.

On completion of the training, a citizen will be enlisted as a member of NRF and remain on the list until he/she exceeds the age of 45.

"The members of the force will be brought together in rotation every three years and they will be provided with two weeks' refreshment training.

General mobilisation will take place after every five years," a member of the parliamentary body said.

In an emergency situation, at least two lakh reserved force could be mobilised within one to two weeks and the total force could be mobilised in four weeks to join the country's armed forces and face any external aggression, the members said.

The member said the gap between people and armed forces will also be reduced once the system is introduced.

Former army chief Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, who was also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry in the last parliament, appreciated the present committee's idea for NRF.

"We have constraint of resources. But we have vast population. So, people should be involved in the country's defence system in an integrated way," he said, adding, "Discussion in details should be held to find more effective ways to this end."

Criminals hijack car after injuring owner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed criminals hijacked a private car after injuring its owner severely in the city's Dhanmondi area in the early hours of Thursday.

Injured car owner Sarkar Maswood Hasan, a businessman, was admitted to hospital with severe wounds in his head and hands.

Hasan said a gang of six armed criminals took away his silver coloured Toyota Allion private car at around 12:30am after hitting him in his head with a pistol and stabbing him with knives when he tried to resist the criminals at Dhanmondi Road-27.

He said three of the six-member gang sped away in his car while the other three in their own car.

The gang swooped on Hasan when he was returning to his Lalma residence.

Dhanmondi Police Station officer-in-charge Shah Alam said they were trying to recover the car and arrest the criminals.

Private initiatives in healthcare lauded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Primary and Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Amin yesterday said the government would encourage private initiatives side by side with public ones to ensure quality healthcare service for the people in the country, says a press release.

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Relics found in Dinajpur

FROM PAGE 16

He said assemblages of pottery found during the excavations have been compared to the stratigraphically indexed pottery from Mahasthan and Maldah in West Bengal. The well and brick structures also indicate that these Buddhist ruins belong tentatively to the 10th -11th century AD.

He said this is the first time in Bangladesh that three monasteries within the proximity of six square miles have been excavated in the northern part of the country.

Led by Prof Syed Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan of the same department, the team has been executing a systematic and

detailed exploration and mapping the site for the last three years.

The archaeological potential of the area was first recognised in 2001, during an exploration by the teachers and students of the department.

Swadhin Sen told to The Daily Star that they excavated two sites in 2006 and discovered remains of two Buddhist monasteries and a Chaitya (a small shrine).

The first monastery is a square with a row of rooms with verandas in the east side. About 10 metres south from there, archaeologists found a small shrine with a staircase leading back to the monastery.

The ruins of the second

monastery were found 30 metres southeast from the first one. The remains were only partial as the locals destroyed the main mound, said Swadhin Sen, adding that the remaining two cells with a veranda were in a dilapidated state.

The third monastery was excavated in 2008.

This year the archaeologists confirmed its existence 300 metres southeast from the first one. They analysed the alignments and patterns of tunnels dug by robbers for looting and the exposed walls.

Swadhin Sen alleged that ignorant of historical significance the nearby brickfields are destroying the ruins.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zakaria Ahmed Chowdhury, a former deputy secretary of Parliament Secretariat and son of late Rafique Ahmed Chowdhury of Ronkeli in Sylhet, breathed his last at a hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 68.

He left behind his two sons and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Sylhet Dargah graveyard last night.

Pinky's death by burning

FROM PAGE 1

Md Ibrahim Khalil, who was the investigation officer of the case before DB took it over.

Latifa said, "I did not say that my daughter committed suicide. I told police that hearing Pinky's scream I rushed to the spot and saw Tabarak running away from my house, while Pinky in flames jumped into the adjacent pond."

She also said since she had not seen who had set her daughter on fire she did not want to mention any suspect, but she definitely wanted to record that she saw Tabarak running away, and definitely did not want to identify the incident as a suicide. She also said later on death bed Pinky told her that Tabarak had doused Pinky with kerosene and set her on fire with a matchstick.

"When I did not want to mention any suspect, a police person at the station asked me to mention a name, saying that the merit of the case would be weak if I did not mention any name," Latifa said adding that she was tremendously traumatised at the moment, so when police read out the recorded statement to her she could not pay much attention.

She could not tell the name of the police person who recorded her statement, but said she will recognise him if she sees him again.

Latifa alleged that Tabarak's family is now spreading unfounded filthy rumours about her to prove that because

of her, Pinky committed suicide.

Pinky died on April 5 after being set on fire in her Kona Bhawal village residence of Tarail upazila in Kishoreganj. Right before Pinky died she told Latifa that Tabarak set fire to her, and requested her mother to make sure that her killer is punished.

According to local residents, and Pinky's mother and classmates, Tabarak had stalked Pinky for two years and harassed her with unwanted advances including repeated proposals for marriage.

Tabarak is from an influential local family. According to the local residents, Tabarak has a history of vile criminality, and everybody in the area is afraid of his temper and brutality. But because of his family's power, Tabarak's deeds usually go unpunished, the residents added.

On the other hand, the victim's family is very poor. Pinky's father is currently a bakery worker in Sylhet, who earlier used to pull rickshaws in the capital to earn a living for his family.

Sub-inspector Khalil said police have been guarding the complainant's house since Thursday evening to avert any possible attack.

Latifa said she will seek help of the prime minister if she is denied justice at the local level.

The SP said he himself will monitor the case from now on, and that is why the case was transferred to DB.

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