



Holding pitchers upside down symbolising a scarcity of water, residents of Mirsharibagh in Jatrahari demonstrate blocking a portion of a road in the area yesterday. The residents took to the streets for nearly an hour demanding supply of water. The water crisis has turned acute in many parts of the capital making lives of dwellers a sheer misery. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Water crisis all around Dhaka

Load shedding, ground water depletion, malfunction of deep tube wells main reasons

HELEML ALAM

As soon as the clock strikes midnight, Shaheen Noor wakes up. Hurriedly, the resident of the capital's Uttara (sector-14) fetches empty containers and puts them underneath water taps and waits patiently.

"This has been going on for the last five days. We're not getting any water the entire day," said Shaheen who lives on Road-17 in the area. "It's only at night we get water, but that is too insufficient."

"The situation is awful. Can you imagine how badly this has affected our lives, especially during Ramadan?" she told this correspondent.

She said the caretaker of the building has been spending almost the entire night trying to fetch water for the tenants.

But the supply was so little for the last couple of days that he could hardly get a bucket full of water.

Shaheen said they even bought water from the water supply trucks of Wasa (Water Supply and Sewerage Authority). "It was still not enough."

Many of the residents have spoken to the Wasa authorities regarding the issue but to no avail, she alleged.

"We want a solution," she said.

Like Shaheen, residents of parts of Banasree, Kaderabhab Housing, Katarak, Dakkhin Khan, Kalsbi of Mirpur, Uttar Khan, Shekhetur, Mirpur-1, Agamsi Lane, East Jurain, Madhubagh and Madhya Badda have been suffering from severe water crises for the last one to two weeks.

The crisis intensified at Mirsharibagh in Jatrahari, where residents are facing an acute water crisis for the last couple of months. Their sufferings intensified during Ramadan.

Out of frustration, some of the residents yesterday demonstrated blocking a road in the area for an hour, demanding supply of water. They were holding empty buckets and jars symbolising the water scarcity they were facing.

According to Wasa sources, the ongoing load shedding, depletion of ground water and equipment malfunction of



Fahim Munaim's first anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of Syed Fahim Munaim, former chief executive officer and chief editor at Maasranga Television.

He died of a cardiac arrest at his Gulshan residence at age 63, leaving behind his wife, three sons, a daughter-in-law, and a host of relatives, well-wishers and admirers.

Also a former executive editor of The Daily Star, Fahim was involved in the media industry for more than three decades and contributed to the development of professional and ethical journalism in the country. He was managing editor at The Daily Star from 1996 to 2007.

He joined The Daily Star on June 10, 1996 as deputy managing editor and was promoted to managing editor on December 1 of the following year.

Fahim became executive editor of the newspaper on February 1, 2010.

Firefighters a tap away

MD MEZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

It's just a matter of a phone call and you could have saved many lives.

In most of the cases, panicky residents can't reach firefighters in time as they do not have phone numbers of fire stations during the inferno, causing huge damage to lives or properties.

Is there any way out of the situation?

"We started brainstorming on how to create a system which can relieve people of such dreadful situations within seconds," said Sabrina Rashid Sheony, a student of the water resources engineering department at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

FireCom is the brainchild of four friends from BUET and through the app anyone can get connected with a nearby fire station by just pressing a menu button of a smartphone.

Sabrina, SM Raiyan Chowdhury Akash, Rafid UL Islam and Kinjol Bardua developed the app after a 36-hour effort at a competition titled "Braceathon", organised by Brac on March 3 and 4.

A four-member team, led by Sabrina, won the contest in the fire response category at Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

The team leader comes up with a clear concept about the function of the app in

a talk with this reporter on BUET campus one morning.

"There are mainly three reasons behind any major damage caused by fire. Firstly, we can't inform the fire service and nearby hospital timely and finally firefighting vehicles can't reach the spot in time due to traffic congestion," said Sabrina.

"In such a situation, people can easily reach a fire control room, traffic control room and hospitals within seconds through our app by pressing its emergency button. As a result, firefighters of the nearby station will leave quickly, traffic police clear the road and the hospital authorities can send an ambulance as soon as possible." She asked the personnel of the fire control room and traffic control room can locate the place of occurrence, she said such a search system is also available in the app.

Rafid of computer science and engineering added, "We named a hardware version of FireCom also Automatic Fire Control System (AFCS)."

If fire breaks out at midnight when everyone is in deep sleep, one will not be available to press the emergency button of the app during this situation. At that time,

A F C S

HC summons four cops over JU student handcuffing

ASK demands action against harassment of female students in police custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the officer-in-charge (OC) of Ashulia Police Station to appear before it again on June 5 to explain why a Jahangirnagar University student, who was accused in a vandalism case, was handcuffed while being treated in hospital.

Apart from OC Mohsinul Quader, a sub-inspector and two constables of the station were also summoned on the same day to get explanations.

The court passed the order after the OC appeared yesterday in compliance with its May 29 order.

The OC told the court that he was not on duty when JU student Nazmul Hossain was handcuffed while being treated at Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar. An SI and two constables were responsible for handcuffing him, he said.

The HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice AKM Zahidul Haque yesterday passed the order during the hearing of a summons (of its own) rule issued on May 29 over the legality of handcuffing the student during treatment.

Abdul Matin Khasru, the OC's counsel, told The Daily Star

Participatory polls top priority

Agree CEC, US envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda and US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Bernick have agreed that they want the 11th parliamentary election to be participatory.

Both sides -- the CEC and the US envoy -- want a fair election unlike February 12 [February 15, 1996] election or January 5 election [2014].

"EC Secretary Muhammad Abdullah told reporters after a meeting between the US envoy and the CEC at the election commission office in the capital yesterday.

"The US wants that the next national election would be a participatory, violence-free and credible one to all quarters. And the US is ready to cooperate with the chief election commissioner of the Election Commission in this regard," the EC secretary quoted the US ambassador as saying.

Emerging from the 90-minute meeting, Marcia Bernick also told reporters that they had discussed about the upcoming national election.

"Of course, the topic was upcoming election," she said.



The four youngsters who developed the innovative mobile phone application FireCom -- a fire emergency notification system. From left, Rafid, Sheony, Akash and Kinjol on the campus of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology where they study. PHOTO: COLLECTED

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ADMISSION TEST

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