

WASA SUPPLY IN CAPITAL

16pc water not clean

Authority says in own report, identifies 57 areas getting contaminated water



"I fail to understand why people would burn gas to boil supply water that is 100 percent pure and safe."

WASA MD TAQSEM A KHAN AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON APRIL 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A month after boasting about its water quality, Dhaka Wasa yesterday revealed that its water is polluted in 57 city areas because of broken-down supply lines.
The official water supplier in the city made the admission in a report submitted before the High Court.
The local government and rural development ministry submitted the report on behalf of Wasa, as per the court's order on Monday.

The Wasa sent the report, based on consumers' allegations, to the ministry the same day.
The report said the Wasa would test the water of those areas at the laboratories of Dhaka University, Buet, and icddr,b.
The development comes less than a month after Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan claimed that Wasa water "is 100 percent pure," while also admitting that sometimes he himself boils the water at his home.

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Locals of East Dholaipar queue up their pitchers, jerrycans, and bottles at a pump station to collect water. The area suffers from poor supply of water. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



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Rice growers frustrated at low price urge govt

STAR REPORT

Frustrated by huge losses, many farmers are demanding that the government procure paddy or rice directly from them rather than the rice mill owners.
"In the current system, farmers have no choice but to sell their harvest to local rice mill owners. So, those middlemen become the beneficiaries and the farmers become victims," said Aziz Mollah, a farmer of Dhulauri village of Pabna's Santhia upazila.
Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday told reporters at his office, "Middlemen exist throughout the world. Who are the middlemen? Wholesalers? Wholesalers are needed. Can farmers bring paddy to Karwan Bazar and sell?
"We are buying rice at Tk 36 a kg. But farmers don't get the money. Political

influence and influential people interfere...."
However, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder told reporters in Naogaon that there was no political influence in rice procurement.
To express their solidarity, students in different districts have joined the frustrated farmers in protesting the low prices of paddy.
Farmers have been saying that their production cost is higher than the market price of rice and paddy.
"We had to spend Tk 500 to Tk 550 to produce each maund of rice. But the price hovers between Tk 400 or Tk 450," said Ripon Islam, a farmer at Pakarmatha village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.
"We are incurring huge losses. We are selling paddy at low prices. How will the

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Farmers thrashing Boro paddy at Doljor of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila yesterday. What should have been a time of plenty and joy, plummeting prices of paddy during harvest season has eroded their enthusiasm.

PHOTO: S. DILIP ROY

A curious circular

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court administration yesterday asked print and electronic media to refrain from reporting on ongoing cases at the court.
Md Golam Rabbani, registrar of the High Court Division of the SC in the notice available on the SC website said, "It has been noticed recently that some electronic and print media are giving scrolls or publishing news on ongoing cases, which is absolutely unexpected."
"Under the circumstances, it is being requested, upon orders,

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LOAN DEFAULTERS BB extends fresh rescheduling facility

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a baffling move, the central bank yesterday extended a set of new facilities to loan defaulters to give them a fresh lifeline, stoking fears of further deterioration in the banking sector's financial health.
As per the new policy, the defaulters will be allowed to reschedule their classified loans by making a down payment of only 2 percent instead of the existing 10-50 percent.
A maximum 9 percent interest will be charged on the rescheduled loans while the existing interest rate is 12-16 percent.
Besides, the tenure for repayment is 10 years with a grace period of one year.

Based on the bank's relationship with the client, the accrued interest on the defaulted loan can be waived, leaving the defaulter to pay only the principal amount with the new interest rate of 9 percent.
"This will be devastating for the banking sector," said Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, a former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank.
The policy will encourage wilful defaulters to continue with their shady activities without repaying the depositors' money. "It will weaken the foundation of banks," he added.
Earlier, the central bank had extended

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SUBSTANDARD FOOD Licences of 2 more items cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) yesterday cancelled the licences of two more substandard food products, raising the number of such items to nine.
According to a BSTI statement, the two products are: Pure Hathazari Chili Powder of SS Consumer Products (Chattogram) and Kiran Lachchha Seemai of M/S Kiran Products (Naogaon).
Apart from cancelling the two products, the BSTI also suspended licences for other 25 items yesterday.
The 25 food items are: iodised salt of Madhumati, Nur Special, Dada Super, Tin Teer, Madina, and Taj; lachcha shemai (vermicelli) of Jedita, Amrito, Modhuful, Mithai, Well Food, Mishti Mela and Madhuban; turmeric powder of Shan, Manjil and Dolphin; pepper powder of



Dolphin and Surjo; semolina of Nishita; Ghee of Baghabari Special; flour of King; biscuit of Mehedi; chanachur of Macca; honey of Green Lands; and fermented milk of Rupsha.
On Wednesday, BSTI cancelled licences of seven food items and suspended 18.
The seven products are: Al Safi Drinking Water, Narjan Drinking Water, Morn Dew Drinking Water, RR View Drinking Water, Banolata Ghee, Priya's soft drink Powder and Shanta's soft drink powder.
Earlier, the BSTI had announced a total of 52 food products as substandard after collecting 406 samples of food items randomly from the markets across the country and testing those at its laboratory.
Later, the government agency served a show-cause notice upon the companies of the 52 items.

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Fitra fixed at minimum Tk 70

UNB, Dhaka

The Islamic Foundation has fixed this year's Fitra at minimum Tk 70 and maximum Tk 1,980 per person.
Mohammad Nizam Udin, assistant director of Islamic Foundation, yesterday announced the Fitra at a meeting chaired by Hafez Maulana Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, senior Pesh Imam of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and president of the National Fitra Fixing Committee.
The amount has been fixed considering the market prices of flour, dates and other essential items.
Fitra is paid to the poor before attending the Eid prayers.

REFUGEE CAMPS Crime spikes while Rohingyas despair

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

With uncertainty shrouding the Rohingya repatriation, crimes -- from petty thefts to drug peddling, abduction to murder -- have become a commonplace at the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.
Many of the Rohingyas, sheltered in Bangladesh, are now living in a state of panic. They blame unemployment in the camp and rivalry among their leaders for the situation there.
At least 31 people have been killed allegedly by fellow Rohingyas in the camps while many others abducted for ransom since August 2017 when the country saw the exodus of more than 700,000 Rohingyas, who fled atrocities in Myanmar.

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Tigers hoping to break final jinx

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers will be looking forward to a happy ending before they travel to England for the ICC World Cup when they face off against the West Indies in the tri-series final at The Village in Malahide today. The final will start from 3.45pm BST.
Bangladesh put up a strong showing in the league stage with emphatic wins in all three games, undoing West Indies twice, but they have to break a jinx if they want to sign off on an unbeaten note and go to England with full confidence.
Bangladesh have so far played six

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