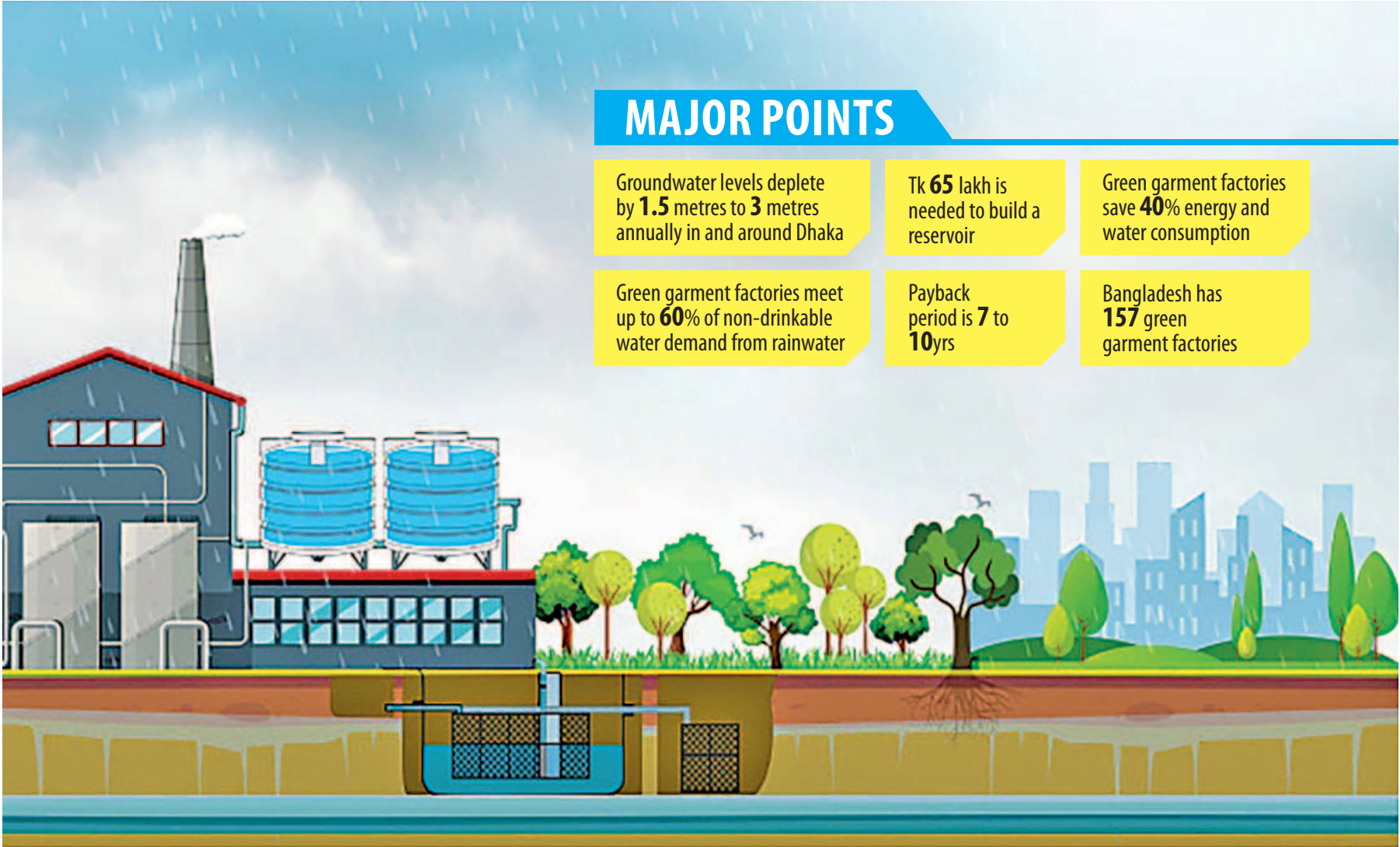


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Rainwater could meet up to 60pc water demand at garment factories

Finds study of WaterAid and RAIN Forum

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Harvested rainwater currently meets 15 per cent to 60 per cent of the demand for non-drinkable water at textile and garment factories, helping the industry further its green movement by reducing dependence on groundwater, according to a study released yesterday.

The study, which aims to give a better understanding on the demand and consumption of water in the apparel production process, was jointly conducted by the WaterAid and the RAIN Forum.

Of the 65 textile and garment manufacturers surveyed, 12 units have rainwater catchment areas of 2,000 square metres while the remaining 53 factories have catchment areas ranging from 2,000 to 8,000 square metres.

The annual demand for non-drinkable water in 17 of these factories is 10,000 cubic metres, while it ranges between 10,000 and 50,000 cubic metres in the remaining 48 units.

As such, around 34 of the factories have the potential to harvest 10,000 cubic metres of rainfall while the other 31 could harvest anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000 cubic metres each year, the study said.

Six of these units meet 15 per cent of their demand for non-drinkable water from the harvested rainwater while 59 meet up to 60 per cent of their demand from the same source.

It takes an investment of about Tk 65 lakh to establish a reservoir in the factory area to harvest rainwater, which is mainly used for non-drinking purposes such as washing clothes.

It usually takes about seven to 10 years to recoup this investment as rainwater harvesting is a cost-effective and environmentally efficient way to reduce groundwater usage and save energy.

Bangladesh is currently the global champion in green garment factories with 157 Leadership in Environmental and Energy in Design (LEED)

certified garment units across the country.

These green garment factories have been saving an annual average of 40 per cent on their power and water costs by introducing rainwater harvesting.

"Harvested rainwater even meets 100 per cent of the demand for non-drinkable water in some garment factories that do not have dyeing and washing units," said Md Ashraf Alam, member secretary of the RAIN Forum.

Alum made this comment while presenting a keynote paper on the study's findings at a discussion on "Industrial

Rainwater Harvesting, a Sustainable Approach to Water Management".

The WaterAid, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Apparel Youth Leaders Association jointly organised the discussion at The Westin Dhaka, where international retailers and brands, industry leaders, apparel exporters and researchers were present.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan said he would include the sustainable water management cell in the innovation centre at the

newly constructed BGMEA building in Uttara this year as a part of its efforts to save the environment.

International retailers and brands as well as Bangladesh's development partners always prefer to finance well-established garment units and usually do not care about smaller factories.

"So, small garment factories need more financial assistance to grow but unfortunately, they are not getting the required assistance from anywhere," Hassan said.

Hasin Jahan, country director of WaterAid, said the water level in and around Dhaka city is falling by 1.5 per cent to 3 per cent annually because of the overuse of groundwater. The water levels in the Tejgaon and Mirpur areas of the capital have fallen the most so far.

Similarly, water is not available in the normal tube wells in areas of Rajshahi due to the falling water levels, she added.

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No charge on credit cards before activation: BB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

From now on, no charges or fees can be imposed on customers before the activation of credit cards, Bangladesh Bank said in a notice yesterday.

However, non-transactional charges can be imposed with the customer's consent only after activation of a credit card.

The banking regulator said to have observed banks imposing different types of non-transaction charges, including annual fees and SMS fees, on credit cards even before their activation.

The central bank also issued some other directives on the imposition of non-transaction charges against credit cards. If the credit card does not have any liability related to the customer's transactions, no penalty other than a non-transactional fee or charge can be imposed for late payments.

But under no circumstances interest or profit can be imposed on non-transactional fees.

Besides, the customers cannot be classified for unpaid liability for non-transactional fees.

However, if the credit card transaction liability of the customer is not paid on time, the customer can be classified by following the loan classification and provisioning policy.

Once the credit card bill is fully or partially collected, the non-transactional fees and the customer's transaction liability can be adjusted.

Steps should be taken to identify customers who have been classified for unpaid non-transactional fees, read the notice.



People take home everyday essentials bought at subsidised rates from Open Market Sale trucks of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh in front of Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday. Cooking oil costs Tk 110 per litre while lentils and onions were priced at Tk 65 and Tk 30 per kilogramme respectively. In contrast, kitchen markets in Dhaka were selling those for Tk 158, Tk 100 and Tk 45 respectively. Some 450 trucks are running the operation around the country throughout the week, sans Friday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NBFIs, govt entities now allowed to run MFS operation

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday said that non-bank financial institutions and government entities, alongside banks, would be able to run mobile financial services (MFS).

So far in Bangladesh, only banks have been allowed to operate MFS.

The NBFIs and the government entities, however, will have to form a subsidiary to provide MFS, according to a BB guideline.

The parent banks, NBFIs and government entities will have to provide at least 51 per cent of the equity in the subsidiary. The parent entities will have to have a majority in the board.

The minimum paid-up capital requirement of a subsidiary model-based MFS has been set at Tk 45 crore.

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GoZayaan acquires Pakistani travel-tech platform

MAHMUDUL HASAN

GoZayaan has acquired Pakistan-based FindMyAdventure, making it the first travel technology platform in Bangladesh to take over any company beyond its borders.

The local start-up says its expansion overseas was in tune with its aim to play a key role in shaping the future of travel in the South Asian region, paving a path for tech-enabled innovative solutions.

The core reason for acquiring a Pakistani platform is the similarity in geography, internet penetration and user behaviour in terms of travel booking.

For this acquisition, GoZayaan raised an undisclosed amount in extended seed funding backed by existing investors Nordstar Partners,

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BB relaxes policy for NBFI defaulters

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday gave a remedy to the defaulters of non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), saying the borrowers could get a waiver of 50 per cent on their interest amount if they repay loans within a year.

However, the defaulters will have to provide a 2 per cent down payment of their bad assets to enjoy the one-time exit policy, according to a Bangladesh Bank notice.

Loans that turned sour before December 31 last year can enjoy the relaxed policy, which allows NBFIs to waive 50 per cent of the interest imposed.

Imposed interest is generated when lenders calculate the amount when loans stay in the unclassified zone and the default categories of

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