

Mosque water the only alternative

Locals throng establishment’s deep tube-well daily, as Wasa’s water undrinkable

It costs over Tk 50,000 monthly to provide the water. The mosque authority bears the costs, and over thousands of people are benefitting.
Mojibur Rahman, Staff, West Tejturibazar Jame Mosque

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It takes Anwar Hossain, a 60-year-old cook at a mess in the capital’s Farmgate, about an hour to make a trip to the nearest deep tube-well, get 10 litres of water, and return home.
Anwar has difficulties walking but still has to make the journey daily, just to get drinking water. He has been doing this for the last three months, even though there is a water line of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Dhaka Wasa) at his home.
Why is an elderly struggling so much to have access to a basic amenity, that too in the capital?
“The tap water often smells of bleaching powder. The stench doesn’t go away even after boiling. It’s not drinkable,”

Anwar said.
Fortunately, Anwar came to know about the deep tube-well of West Tejturibazar Jame Mosque. And since then, he gets his drinking water from there.
While visiting the mosque for the last one week, a huge gathering was seen in front of the mosque’s tube-well every day from evening.
Like Anwar, residents of West and East Tejturibazar, Green Road and Farmgate areas gather at the mosque to get water, according to locals and mosque authorities. And just like Anwar, everyone has Wasa’s line at home.
Fifth-grader Niloy Pal Biswas, a resident of Green Road, said, “At first, we would drink tap water at home after boiling it, but then it became undrinkable. We

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Residents of West and East Tejturibazar, Green Road and Farmgate areas gather at the mosque to get water, according to locals and mosque authorities. Although all of them have Wasa’s supply at home, they say Wasa’s water is okay for bathing and other uses, but not for drinking. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Traffickers keep GETTING THEIR WAY

Promising better lives abroad, syndicate traffics job seekers to India

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Naim Hossain Sujan thought he would not make it out alive. Lured in with the promise of a well-paying job in France, the 22-year-old from Shariatpur ended up in a ruthless cycle of human trafficking, controlled by a racket in India.
“I came back alive because my family could pay a ransom,” said Naim.
In 2019, Naim’s father initially paid Tk 5 lakh to local syndicate members in 2019, a partial payment for the job in France, while the rest was supposed to be

“They started torturing me for money. Often, they threatened to harm me if my father failed to pay them the rest of the agreed amount. When my father paid them another Tk 6.8 lakh, they returned my passport. But they did not free me.”
NAIM HOSSAIN SUJAN, A victim of trafficking

After being trafficked to India, a major destination for trafficked women and children are “shelter homes” in Kolkata and Delhi, where a series of torturous acts await them. Gang members in India then force the victims to call their families in Bangladesh asking for more money. The victims are threatened with their lives upon failure to pay more.

Romania, Greece, France, Malta, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Egypt, the Maldives and Cambodia and even Canada.
According to investigators, gang members contact them through their agents in different districts. Another major medium is social media.
After being trafficked to India, a major destination for trafficked women and children are “shelter homes” in Kolkata and Delhi, where a series of torturous acts await them.
Gang members in India then force the victims to call their families in Bangladesh asking for more money. The victims are threatened with their lives upon failure to pay more. Some were reportedly even taken to Sri Lanka, where they were left in a jungle.
They would solicit Tk 12 to 15 lakh from each victim. The horrifying stories of their sufferings came to the fore after law enforcers busted two separate trafficking rackets in Dhaka recently and arrested ringleaders and their associates.
According to Khandaker Al Moin, Rab’s legal and media wing director, more than a hundred human trafficking gangs are active across the country.
“We have drives ongoing to arrest members of these gangs,” said Moin.
Since its formation in 2004, Rab alone arrested 1,207 people for their involvement in trafficking and rescued 1,093 victims – 792 males and 301 females – in 406 operations, according to the Rab wing.
During a drive on December 20 last year, Rab busted a transnational trafficking gang in the capital

and arrested the ringleader along with two associates.
In another raid on June 6 last year, Criminal Investigation Department arrested four other members of the gang.
Mozammel Haque, commanding officer of Rab-4, said following the drive, the arrestees admitted to trafficking more than 100 victims to India over the years, promising lucrative jobs in Europe and Australia.
Saiful Islam Dewan (21) from Munshiganj’s Tongibari is yet another victim of the gang. His father Hanif Dewan said he provided Tk 6.20 lakh to ringleader Selim after he promised to send his son to Canada.
He said the gang took his son to India around two years back, but then sent him back.
Jahangir Gazi (34) from Shariatpur, another victim, narrated how he managed to return home from India in November 2019 after spending three months in captivity.
In his desperate attempt to go abroad, he met Mollik Rezaul Haque alias Selim at Dhaka’s Rupnagar in August 2019 through a neighbour. Selim promised to send him to Australia if he paid Tk 16 lakh.
Once the payment was made, he was taken to India, as the gang told him that getting a visa from there would be easier.
Gang members made him a fake Indian NID card and passport and asked him to wait for his visa to Australia.
The gang also convinced him that they would send his nephew Akash to the Netherlands. After the family provided Tk 7.5 lakh for Akash, the gang took the college student to India in December 2020.
“Since then, my nephew has been confined to a safe house in Delhi,” Jahangir told this correspondent on February 14.
Jahangir also mentioned that Selim and his associates kept Akash in a safe house, tortured him and threatened to kill him if they could not pay them more.
“I provided Tk 23.5 lakh to Selim for me and my nephew in good faith to go abroad. I never realised in my worst nightmare that we would be trapped by a trafficking gang.”

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Climate action, right now!

Young greens rally in solidarity with Fridays for Future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Youth activists at a rally yesterday called on the government and other stakeholders to put a stop to environmentally detrimental activities, including use of fossil fuels in the country.
Stressing the need for fostering renewable energy, they urged developed nations to formulate and implement a fast-track strategy to compensate climate-vulnerable countries and provide funds for adaptation.
Fridays for Future Bangladesh and Youthnet for Climate Justice made the demands at the rally held in front of the capital’s Jatiya Press Club, as part of the global climate strike organised by “Fridays for Future”, a worldwide school-student movement.
The strike was simultaneously held in 25 districts. School, college, and university students dressed fully in black, carried banners, festoons, and placards highlighting the climate crisis.
Sohanur Rahman, executive coordinator of Youthnet for Climate Justice, said, “We demand justice, and a sense of responsibility instead of sympathy.”
“Accelerating adaptation or resilience-building centring climate change may seem difficult, but it is vital,” he added.



A florist at Shahbagh meticulously puts flowers on a wreath. On the eve of Independence Day, florists like him prepare over hundreds of these floral arrangements. As these wreaths wither away soon, the artisans try their best to ensure that citizens who want to pay their respects at the National Martyrs' Monument can do so. This photo was taken in front of Dhaka University's Curzon Hall.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Take steps to get int’l recognition of genocide

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should take steps to get international recognition of the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani army during the Liberation War, researchers said yesterday.
They said this while addressing two separate programmes marking National Genocide Day.
“It will not be easy to get international recognition of the genocide carried out by Pakistanis during the war, as the US, China, and parts of the Muslim world were in favour of Pakistanis,” Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee President Shahriar Kabir said at a programme at Bangla Academy, organised by 1971: Genocide-Torture Archive and Museum.
Liberation war researcher and museum trustee chairperson Muntassir Mamoon said the museum is trying to identify district-based genocides, torture centres, mass killing sites, and mass graves to bring the massacre to light.
He said that after preliminary report of survey on 34 districts, they found 14,452 cases of genocide and identified 759 mass graves, 1,048 mass killing sites and 1,027 torture centres.
Speakers at a programme at Bangla Academy and an event organised by Samprity Bangladesh at Jatiya Press Club said the genocide was extensively planned, and was the largest after World War II.
They said that Australian Sydney Morning Herald published a report on March 27, 1971, saying that a minimum of 10,000 to 100,000 people were killed on March 25 during Operation Search Light.
At the programme held at Jatiya Press Club, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun said various researches show the genocide carried “was a planned killing to make the country meritless”.
He said it was planned by then Pakistan government, and as such, “Pakistan will have to seek an open apology for the genocide, which they committed in 1971”.
During her speech, lawmaker Aroma Dutta urged all to pass the accurate history of the war to the next generation.

INDEPENDENCE DAY Nation prepares to celebrate

BSS, Dhaka

The nation is set to celebrate Independence Day today in a befitting manner.
The government has taken elaborate programmes on the occasion.
The programmes will begin by heralding gun salutes early in the morning, as a mark of profound respect to the nation’s heroic struggle for independence in 1971.
The national flag will be hoisted atop all government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings.
The National Memorial at Savar will be the main venue of celebration, where President Md Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths early in the morning.
People from all walks of life, including families of freedom fighters and families of the martyrs, members of diplomatic corps, political leaders, will also pay their respects to the martyrs.

PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 26



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-45	12-45	4-45	6-20	7-45
Jamaat	5-20	1-15	5-00	6-25	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION