

SNAPS

Housewife hacked to death**UNB, Bagerhat**

A housewife was hacked to death at Shashon in Mollahat upazila on Friday.

Police said a group of people led by Abul Mollah hacked Pakhi Begum, 40, after having altercation with her husband Tota Miah over a disputed land. Pakhi Begum died on way to upazila health complex. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

Seven muggers arrested**UNB, Thakurgaon**

Seven muggers were arrested for snatching Tk 1.50 lakh from a doctor in old bus stand area of Thakurgaon town on Wednesday.

The muggers were identified as Moznu, 38, Nasir alias Moshu, 35, Abul Kalam, 37, Sayed, 42, Rafiqul, 30, Giasuddin, 38, and Jamal, 35. They hailed from village Munshi of Madaripur.

11 hurt in clash over pond**UNB, Sirajganj**

Eleven people were injured in a clash over occupation of a pond in Machhimpur area of Sirajganj town on Thursday.

Police said the clash ensued when Shahjahan Ali and his men went to grab the pond where Rezaul Karim was cultivating fish for long. Two shops were also ransacked during the clash. Police rushed to the spot and arrested three youths named Piyar Ali, 26, Masud, 22, and Sanowar Hossain, 27.

Bagha thana OC records rape case reluctantly after 51 days**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

The officer in charge (OC) of Bagha thana recorded a rape case on Wednesday after 51 days of the incident.

The OC took up the rape case when the victim complained to the acting police superintendent (SP) of Rajshahi that the OC, influenced by some local BNP men, was dilly-dallying in recording that very case.

The victim complained that OC Fazlul Haq was giving pressure to her to settle the matter in exchange for money. The rapists were moving scot-free in the area.

On March 3 night, Nurul Islam Nuru, a BNP worker, raped the 27-year-old housewife of a day labourer named Emdadul Haq in his absence. He fastened her mouth with 'gamchha' (a piece of cloth to rub body) in front of her five-year-old son at her makeshift house at village Jhina.

Hearing her hue and cry local people and her husband reached there and caught rapist Nuru. At

night, the rapist's uncle Monirul Islam snatched away Nuru.

The next morning, the victim lodged a complaint to Bagha thana police. In a primary investigation, police recovered the victim's torn cloth, the rapist's wristwatch and sandal from her house. But the victim's complaint was not recorded.

As the OC was dilly dallying to record the case, the victim, on March 11, filed a case with the first class magistrate's court of Rajshahi 'Kha' region accusing Nuru and Monirul under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000.

The court ordered the OC to record the case if there was truth in her allegation.

On March 16, the Forensic Department of Rajshahi Medical College in a report confirmed the victim's sexual abuse and reported that her body carried scratch marks of repression.

On April 17, the OC called the victim and her husband to his

office and asked her to settle the matter in exchange for Tk 10,000 on the plea that she would not be able to afford the cost of the case. She denied and told him that she wanted justice in the court. She informed this before a group of journalists at Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club recently.

When contacted, OC Fazlul Haq termed the victim 'characterless'. He further told this correspondent that the accused told him that they (accused persons) went to her house to realise an outstanding loan. Then her husband confined Nuru on false accusation.

Haq, however, denied the allegation of being influenced, of giving pressure to the victim to settle the matter. He refuted the allegation that the accused were moving freely.

The acting SP of Rajshahi told The Daily Star that the OC was instructed to nab the culprits anyhow following the victim's petition.

Storm lashes Tangail: One killed, 15 hurt**UNB, Tangail**

A violent storm lashed several villages in Delduar upazila of Tangail on Friday morning, killing a woman and injuring 15 people.

Bilkis Banu, 30, of village Nashuria died in house collapse during the storm that razed over 200 houses to the ground, uprooted numerous trees and damaged standing crops.

Four of the injured were admitted to the upazila health complex.

In Thakurgaon, 10 people were injured in house collapse and over 500 houses damaged in a nor'wester that swept over the Sadar upazila on Thursday.

The nor'wester accompanied by hailstorm damaged standing crops in 15 villages including Chapati, Rajagaon, Rajarampur and Batna.

BSF abducts Bangladeshi in Lalmonirhat**UNB, Lalmonirhat**

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Friday kidnapped a Bangladeshi national along with two cows from village Namatari in Aditmari upazila, 15 kilometres off the district town.

The BSF men of Panchahaji camp entered Kutibari area, 300 yards inside the Bangladesh territory, and took away Khorshed Alam, 22, son of Abdus Samad of village Baniatari at about 11 am.

BDR and local sources said the Indian border guards blindfolded Khorshed and took him to their camp along with the cows.

The incident created panic among the villagers along the Durgapur border.

Girl murdered allegedly after rape in Barisal**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Nalchhity police in Jhalokathi district recovered the body of an unidentified 14-year-old girl, a suspected gang-rape and murder victim, from village Thirakathi in Siddhakati union on Thursday night.

The body was recovered from a bush near a small lake called Dafadar Dighi, and bore evidence of rape and death by strangulation, police said.

Police sent the body to the morgue for autopsy.

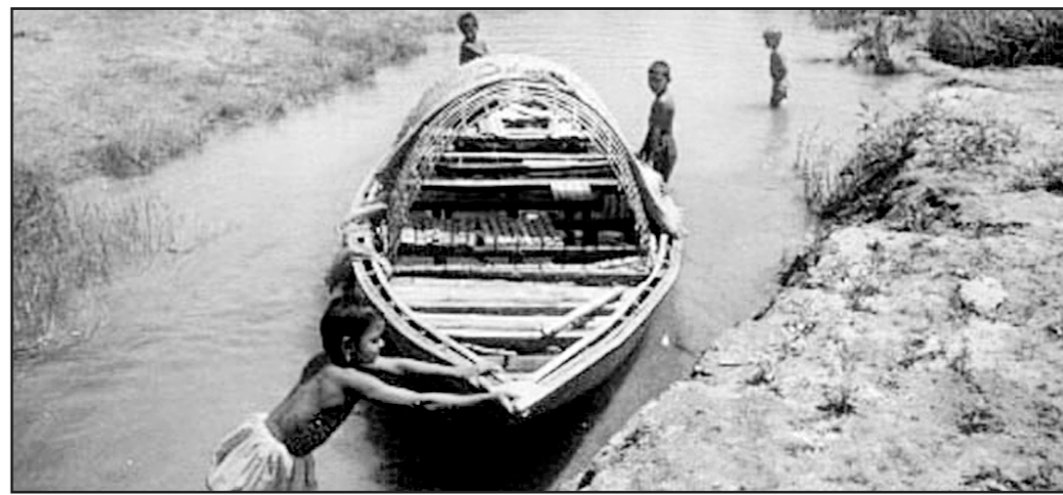


PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

Rural youngsters play in a shrinking canal of Chalan Beel at Shingra in Natore. The famous water body has been drying up where children play in its knee-deep water.

Hilsa production down in greater Faridpur**UNB, Shariatpur**

Indiscriminate catching of hilsa and other fish fries is going on unabated in the rivers Padma, Meghna, Arialkhan, Kumar and Kirtinasha in greater Faridpur.

Unscrupulous fishermen of Shariatpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Gopalganj and Faridpur catch fries every day by using about 10,000 current and 'veshal' nets from

these rivers.

Hilsa fry measuring 4 cm to 15cm are called 'jhatka' which graze in fresh water of the Padma and the Meghna from February to June. After the end of this period, they migrate to sea.

During grazing period, fries are netted by unscrupulous fishermen everywhere in the region.

Government banned catching of fries below nine inches to

increase fish production. Despite the ban, huge quantity of different types of fries including ruhi, katla, mrigel, magur, shing and hilsha are being caught from different rivers. Those are sold in all the markets of Shariatpur, Madaripur, Rajbari, Gopalganj and Faridpur before the eyes of law enforcers.

As elsewhere, acute scarcity of fish is prevailing in the region owing to this phenomenon, locals alleged.

A maund of hilsa is now selling at Tk 6,600 against Tk 1,200 last year, according to fishermen.

Pisciculture has been badly affected due to massive accumulation of silt in the rivers Padma, Meghna, Arialkhan and other water bodies and canals.

Besides, unplanned use of chemical fertiliser and insecticide in cropland seriously affected the growth of fries. Traditionally the peak season of hilsa fishing begins in June.

Hundreds of ice cream factories have become inoperative due to short supply of hilsa fish. Factory owners said price of ice came down as two cans of ice are now selling at Tk 120 against Tk 480 last year.

Thousands of fishermen face numerous problems including shortage of fund and price-hike of fishing materials.

Earlier, different kinds of fish were available in abundance in rivers, ponds and beels, but the situation has been reversed due to indiscriminate fishing by non-professionals.