

SNAPS

Bus mishap kills girl

UNB, Jhenidah

A little girl was killed in a road accident at Shadhuhati crossing in Sadar upazila on Jhenidah-Chuadanga road on Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Fahima, 12, daughter of Abu Bakar of Kutubpur in Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga. Police said Fahima was crushed under the wheels of a Jhenidah-bound bus when she was crossing the road.

Woman killed for dowry

UNB, Savar

A woman was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry in Sobujbag area of Savar Pourashava here on Saturday.

Police and locals said Azad Hossain poured kerosene on his wife Sakhina Begum, 26, mother of two children, and set afire as she failed to bring dowry from her parents. She was rushed to the nearby Enam Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared her dead.

Septuagenarian killed by 'son'

UNB, Comilla

A septuagenarian was killed allegedly by his son at Pambaish village in Barura upazila on Friday.

Police and locals said Abdul Barek, 75, died on the spot when his younger son Shafiqul Islam hit him with a stick. The incident occurred when Abdul Barek tried to resist his son Shafiqul Islam from assaulting his elder brother Anwar Hossain following a family feud.

Touchstone statue recovered

UNB, Joypurhat

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) recovered a statue of touchstone worth Tk 2 crore from Siliim village in Kalai upazila on Friday.

BDR members raided the village and recovered the 55-kg statue from an abandoned house. The statue was 3 feet high and 1.5 feet wide. None was arrested.

Spawning in Halda hit by netting of mother fishes

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Spawn collection is declining by about 30 per cent annually in the country's lone natural fish breeding centres in Halda river in Raozan and Hathazari due to illegal netting of mother fishes.

Groups of unscrupulous people lay nets at the entry and exit points of the spawning centres at Sartterghat and Madhuna ghat and catch the mother fishes, sources said.

Such illegally caught mother fishes like Ruhi, Katal, Mrigel, and Kalaboush weighing 10 to 30 kilograms are seen on sale at fish markets in the port city, they said.

Mother fishes migrate to the spawning centres in Halda river from Karnaphuli, Matamuhuri and Sangu during the Bengali months of Baishakh and Jaishtha (April and May).

They usually release spawns during full moon, particularly at the first shower of the monsoon, in

the ten kilometre stretch of Halda from Sartterghat in Raozan to Madunaghat in Hathazari.

The mother fishes release spawns in two or three phases. The first phase of spawning this year took place on May 5. Mother fishes were caught in a massive scale during and after the first spawning, the sources said. These fishes can be easily caught after spawning because they become weak.

Each phase continues for about twelve hours when hundreds of local people in small boats net the spawns (locally called renu) in conventional ways with cloths or nets.

They preserve the spawns in small holes dug in the ground. Fish fries come out of the spawns within four days. The 4-day old fries are sold at Tk. 12000 to 14,000 per kg to fish farmers coming from different parts of the country.

Fish fries worth over Tk 20 crore can be produced if the illegal netting of mother fishes can be stopped and survival of the spawns

and fries is ensured, they said.

Substantial quantities of spawns are also destroyed during netting by cloth and conventional nets. Survival rate of the 4-day fries is also below 50 per cent, the sources said.

Last year, 25,835 kgs of fertilised spawns were collected in two phases (on May 5 and May 27) and 598.68 kgs of 4-day old fries were produced from those.

When contacted, District Fisheries Officer (DFO) Zafar Ahmad said he heard about illegal netting of mother fishes and was investigating the matter.

Prof Mohammad Ali Azadi, teacher of Zoology department at Chittagong University, said proper collection of spawns, preservation of fries and management of the breeding centres could increase fry production manifold to meet the country's demand.

Prof Azadi studied spawning and breeding of fries at the Halda for two decades. He is now con-

ducting a research on the breeding centres under SUFER (Support for University Fisheries Education and Research) project financed by a UK-based organization, DFID.

He said the Halda is the only river in the world from where spawns are collected for hatching. Halda fries are the best in the country. Fries produced in hatcheries grow 300gms to 500gms in six months while those from Halda grow up to 3kg each, he said.

He regretted that the rates of hatching and survival of fries are very poor due to lack of proper steps.

A government decision to turn the spawning centres into fish sanctuaries has not been implemented in two years, the sources said.

Experts said the centres should be declared fish sanctuaries and fishing in Halda, Karnaphuli, Sangu and the Matamuhuri should be banned during March-July.



PHOTO: REZAUL HAQUE

The once mighty Ghagot at Pulbandi in Gaibandha is now a cultivable land. Farmers grew boro and wheat this season on the silted riverbed.

Main witness 'absconding' in Mirabazaar murder case

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Trial of a sensational double murder case in the Speedy Trial Court, Sylhet is being delayed due to non-appearance of the main witness before the court.

Shitol Ranajan Dey alias Shitol is the lone witness who identified the alleged killers of Anwara Begum, wife of businessman Ajab Ali Sheth and domestic help Jubeda Begum in Mirabazaar area of the city. They were killed on February 17, 2001.

The court issued warrant of arrest thrice against him because of his non-appearance before the court.

Shitol and his family members have been missing from their house since March 4.

Their neighbours said Shitol stayed at his house on the night of

March 3. But the house is under lock and key since the morning of March 4, they said.

The murder case lodged with Kotwali police on March 5.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police submitted charge sheet in the court on June 15, 2002, accusing 10 people.

The charge-sheeted persons are Chamak, Salek, Hannan, Matlib, Kala Miah, Faruque Uddin, Tojoi Miah, Fakhurul Islam, Jainal Ahmed and Sattar Miah.

Five of them are in jail hajat, four got bail and the other accused -- Jainal Ahmedis yet to be nabbed.

The court recorded depositions of 41 out of 55 witnesses. Shitol is the main witness.

All the 36 police stations in Sylhet division have been asked to

arrest Shitol.

On April 19 this year, police made a futile attempt to nab him from his village home.

Meanwhile, the complainant, Ajab Ali Sheth, alleged that Shitol's cousin Fanindra Ranjan Dey sent three letters to him through a messenger demanding Tk 40,000 for producing Shitol before court for deposition. He however said Fanindra did this on pressure from the alleged killers.

But Fanindra said the alleged killers forced Shitol to go into hiding or they kept him confined.

The delay in trial of the case was discussed at a May 12 meeting of the divisional committee for monitoring trial of sensational cases with Divisional Commissioner Nazrul Islam in the chair.

Young trader fights for life

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A 25-year-old businessman, Saiful Islam Parag, is fighting for life at Faridganj hospital in Chandpur.

He sustained serious injuries when attacked by two alleged criminals at Faridganj Kathpatti Bazaar at 10 in the morning on Thursday. He was going towards his Bata shoe store at that time.

Parag, son of Md Hanif Patwary of village Char Hogla in Faridganj thana was admitted to hospital with critical head injury.

Absconding UP chairman held

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An absconding Union Parishad (UP) chairman in the district, wanted in 12 cases including four for murders, was arrested along with one of his accomplices from Iswardi in Pabna recently.

Tipped-off, Kushtia and Pabna police jointly raided a house at Iswardi town at about 4:30 am and arrested Azibar Rahman, 45, along with Kakon, 30. Both are activists of Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD).

Police said Azibar, a listed criminal in the region, is accused in the cases filed with Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur thanas.

Azibar was elected chairman of Jhoudia Union Parishad in Kushtia in the last UP election.

Body recovered

UNB, Panchagarh

Police recovered the body of a youth from the Korotoa river four days before his marriage ceremony at Bhajanpur village of Tetulia upazila on Tuesday.

BSS, Joypurhat

Incidents of road accident are on alarming rise in the northern region.

According to official sources, 248 persons were killed and 526 others seriously injured in 213 road mishaps in first four months of current year in 16 northern districts.

Local people and relatives of the victims blamed corrupt officials of law enforcing agencies, lack of fitness of vehicles plying on over 200 routes, improper application of existing laws and the 'damn care attitude' of the drives for the accidents.

In almost all cases, owners of the damaged vehicles get compensations from insurance companies, but relatives of the victims and injured do not get the same as owners do not insure seats of their vehicles though it is mandatory as per law of the land. The concerned

authorities seemed to be quite indifferent towards such major violation of rules for unknown reasons, they alleged.

Traffic police are blamed for collecting tolls from drivers and helpers of unfit vehicles instead of taking legal action against them.

As a result, road mishaps are on the rise in recent years.

According to police sources, a total of 67 persons were killed and 136 others seriously injured from 59 road accidents in January, 62 killed, 167 injured from 47 accidents in February, 57 killed, 73 injured from 50 accidents in March and 62 persons were killed and 150 others seriously injured from 56 road accidents in April here.

Another report from Tangail says: Bus journey in different routes of Tangail has become hazardous due to various reasons, including overloading and deplorable condition of roads.

Passengers alleged that they are facing inconveniences due to overloading of passengers, reckless driving and lack of basic amenities.

Most of the buses, running in deplorable condition, are engaged in races to pick up passengers without considering the capacity of vehicles.

Sometimes, passengers are found travelling on the rooftops and even on the foot boards at the risk of their lives. The overloaded buses ply at maximum speed and very often cause road accidents.

Most of the buses, especially the old ones, go out of order on the way causing untold sufferings to passengers particularly to women and children. Passengers further alleged that the conductors very often misbehave with them over bus fares.

Besides, vehicles that emit black smoke are also plying on roads without restriction.