



PHOTO: ZOAHER HOSSAIN SIKDER

As winter approaches, seagulls have started arriving on the bank of river Karnaphuli this year. The birds remain busy in flying on the bank, shoal and the river. City people rush to the bank of river to enjoy the scene every afternoon. The photo was taken from Firingibazar area on Sunday.

Bumper fish catches at Kaptai Lake

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

Fish production at Kaptai Lake has increased remarkably in recent time following steps to stop smuggling, regular raids against use of current nets, strict enforcement of the ban on fishing during May-August and release of more fish fry in the lake.

Besides, Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC) has declared the DC Banglo areas as fish sanctuary for boosting fish production.

On an average about 8,000 metric tons (MT) of different species of fish, except the local consumption, worth over Tk 70 crore are being produced annually in the lake. The annual local consumption is around 3,000 MT.

But the lake saw a bumper production of 10,000 MT of fish worth about Tk 100 crore during 2007-2008 fiscal and the government earned revenue of Tk 4 crore, sources at the BFDC said.

They said the government earned about Tk 3.50 crore as revenue when production was 8,000 MT in the previous fiscal (2006-2007).

Large variety of species of fishes are found in the lake, of which Ruhi, Katla, Mrigel, Telapia, Mahal, Bara Chhitol, Boal, Mohashoyl, Gojar, Poya, Tengra, Aair, Kajali, Pati Pabda, Kalibous, Sadaghonia, Kalighonia, Faisya, Bacha, Mola, Chapila and Kechki are prominent. Of 71 species of fish, only 36 species could be collected in the lake.

The production, however, of some large species like Ruhi, Katla and Mrighel has reduced unexpectedly during the last few years due to destruction of natural breeding ground, diversion of water flows, use of current nets, netting fries and inadequate water level, BFDC sources said.

About 15 to 20 MT of fishes are collected a day when royalty (revenue) of large fish is Tk 25 per kg, medium category Tk 12 to 22 and small ones only Tk 8.

A kg of large fish such as Ruhi, Katla, Mrigal and Mahal is sold at Tk 200 to 250, Kalighonia Tk 120 to 150, Chhitol Tk 300, Bacha Tk 200, Aair Tk 90, Pholi Tk 120, Tengra Tk 150, Kalibus Tk 200, Telapia Tk 190 to 120, Kajali Tk 120, Shoal Tk 110, Boal Tk 150, Gojar Tk 80, Chapila Tk 70 and Kechki Tk 60 at

local markets.

There are fish sanctuaries at Longudu, District Fishery Ghat and Banarupa in Rangamati town, five check posts, an ice factory and five fish landing ghats under the BFDC.

Some 60 traders are involved with fish trading in the lake.

Sources said though 500 people are enlisted with BFDC as professional fishermen the number of fishermen in the lake will be much higher. About 5,000 to 6,000 people living on the banks of the lake are directly or indirectly earned their livelihood from fishing, they said.

After meeting local demand in three hill districts of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari, fishes of the lake are marketed to other parts of country, including Chittagong and Dhaka. Besides, large quantities of fish are also exported.

Kaptai Hrad Motso Babsayee Samity Secretary Harun Ur Rashid said he is involved with fish trading for 28 years. The unregistered fishermen used to catch the fish fries immediately after their release by BFDC during the ban-period for lack of proper monitor-

ing, he said, adding that this practice ultimately hampered the production.

Murad Khandaker, a fish trader of Kutun Enterprise in Chittagong, said he supplies fish to different factories and companies, including Seamark, Beximco Pharma, Apex, Meghna, Costal and Minhar who export those to Middle Eastern and European countries.

Azad Rahman of BFDC said they will launch a programme soon with all concerned including fishermen, local community and fish traders to build awareness among the mass people about ban period (MAY-August) when catching fish fries is prohibited.

Kazi Nazrul Islam, president of Rangamati Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) also a member of Kaptai Lake Control Committee (KLCC), said the government should hand over the lake to private sector to boost fish production.

Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman Jagat Jyoti Chakma said fish production will be much higher if the lake is given to the district council.

Ashar Alo a ray of Hope for HIV Positives

Amina faces stigma by her in-laws for which her husband is responsible

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Amina after being diagnosed HIV positive, transmitted by her expatriate husband in 2006, has been facing immense discrimination and stigma from her in-laws.

Life had been devastated for young Amina (not her real name) before she started getting counsel at a non-government organisation (NGO) that made her realise that a HIV positive person can also lead a normal life like others.

Amina said she is still blamed for bringing the misery to the family and faces dishonour every now and then for which she is not responsible.

Blaming ignorance of the people about the disease for such attitude, she called for more programmes to create awareness among the common people in this regard.

People living with HIV/AIDS are badly treated by the family members as well as the people surrounding them, doctors and patients said.

With this most of the patients suffer lot due to lack of proper diagnosis and treatment facility as well as absence of organisations to provide proper care, treatment and support to them.

Twenty-six-year-old Amina got married in 2002 to Abdul (not his real name), an expatriate living in Saudi Arab where he was infected. Both of them faced a lot in a hospital here after her husband was detected.

While talking to this correspondent on Sunday Amina said her husband got admitted to a local hospital at Chandanaish in 2006 with severe fever and diarrhoea. He was shifted to a city clinic from the hospital after one month as his condition was not improving. HIV was detected in his body at the clinic. The nurses harassed and forced them to leave clinic after the disease was diagnosed, she said.

HIV and AIDS expert Dr AQM Sirajul Islam took them to the Ashar Alo Society (AAS), a peer support group comprising of HIV patients and their family members or relatives.

AAS Executive Director Habiba Akhter said AAS has been working for caring and supporting, counselling and empowering the Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) since its inception in 2000. It has branches in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Jessore and Khulna.

Around 150 PLHAs have benefited from AAS programme in Chittagong during the last few years, AAS activists said.



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An official counsels a patient at the Ashar Alo Society centre.

AAS provides services including HIV test maintaining secrecy and counselling to the PLHAs for leading positive life.

Training and counselling to the family members of the PLHAs and treatment with free medicine, they added.

AAS official Md Mohsin said they provide drugs, including ARV (Anti Retro Virul), to the member patients free of cost.

Amina's husband is now an employee at AAS and both of them get regular counselling as well as the medicine at the centre and living with their five-year-old son.

Akram (not real name), a farmer and vegetable seller of Barabkunda, after being diagnosed HIV positive, faced many problems in running his business in his locality. He said people at the local market kicked his basket down several times to stop him selling vegetables.

Local people changed the attitude towards Akram after AAS had launched an awareness campaign in the area.

Rahman (not real name) said people need much time to be detected as the diagnosis of the deadly disease is not available here. Rahman, an expatriate in Bahrain for 13 years, was tested HIV positive in March this year.

Dr Mansurul Alam, medical officer of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), said the diagnosis should be made available at local hospitals.

Chittagong District Civil Surgeon Dr Jalal Uddin said HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh is still a talked about subject for overriding superstition.

He said emphasis should be given on more awareness campaign as well as set up more centres like AAS in different areas to help the PLHAs leading a normal life.

theweekthatwas

Health camp held

A free blood grouping, donation and physiotherapy camp were held in the port city on Friday. Chittagong Lions Club, Leo Club and non-government organisation Tripto jointly organised the camp in Mohammad Pur area.

Immediate Past Lions District Governor Kabir Uddin Bhuiyan was the chief guest at the discussion with Didarul Alam Chowdhury in the chair.

Former secretary Kamal Uddin, Lions District Cabinet Secretary Prasun Kumar Barua, Cabinet Treasurer Jahangir Alam, Zone Chairperson MA Taher Khan, Leo Adviser Auran Baran Barua, Tripto President Selim Javed and General Secretary Imran Haider Khan took part in the discussion.

A total of 95 gout patients received physiotherapy while blood groups of 500 people were identified and 30 bags of blood were collected at the camp.

Call to establish justice

Speakers at a seminar said message of Islam and Christianity is peace and justice is needed for establishing peace and harmony in the world.

Chittagong Catholic Diocesan Dialogue and Social Commission organised the seminar on "Ground of relationship among Muslims and Christians: Love of

one God and Love to the Neighbours" at Caritas Regional Training Centre on Saturday.

Bishop of Chittagong Patrick D Rozario inaugurated the seminar.

Patrick in his speech said 138 Muslim leaders from 43 countries sent letters to Pope XVI the Benedict in 2007 on the subject 'A common word between us and you'.

"The mission of the letter was to strengthen the bond of solidarity among the Islamic and Christian religious leaders to lead the world on the way to peace and harmony," Patrick said.

Prof Badiur Rahman presented a paper on "Love of one God and Love to the neighbours in the concept of Islam" while Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka Dr Theotonius Gomes on "Love of one God and Love to the neighbours in the concept of Christianity."

The seminar also discussed about the Catholic Muslim Forum.

A total of 64 participants from both the religions including teachers of different universities, colleges, high schools and some leaders from different institutions and society took part in the seminar.

Open house day held

Open house day of Patenga Model Police Station under Chittagong Metropolitan (CMP) Police was held at the station on Wednesday.

CMP Deputy Commissioner (Bandar) Shakhawat Hossain was the chief guest at the programme with Officer in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Abdullah in the chair.

Speakers at the programme said there is no alternative to coordinated efforts by the police, people and their representatives for maintaining law and order.

They emphasised the need for identifying problems of the locality under the police station and solving them.

CMP Assistant Commissioner Moshtaq Ahmed was the special guest at the programme.

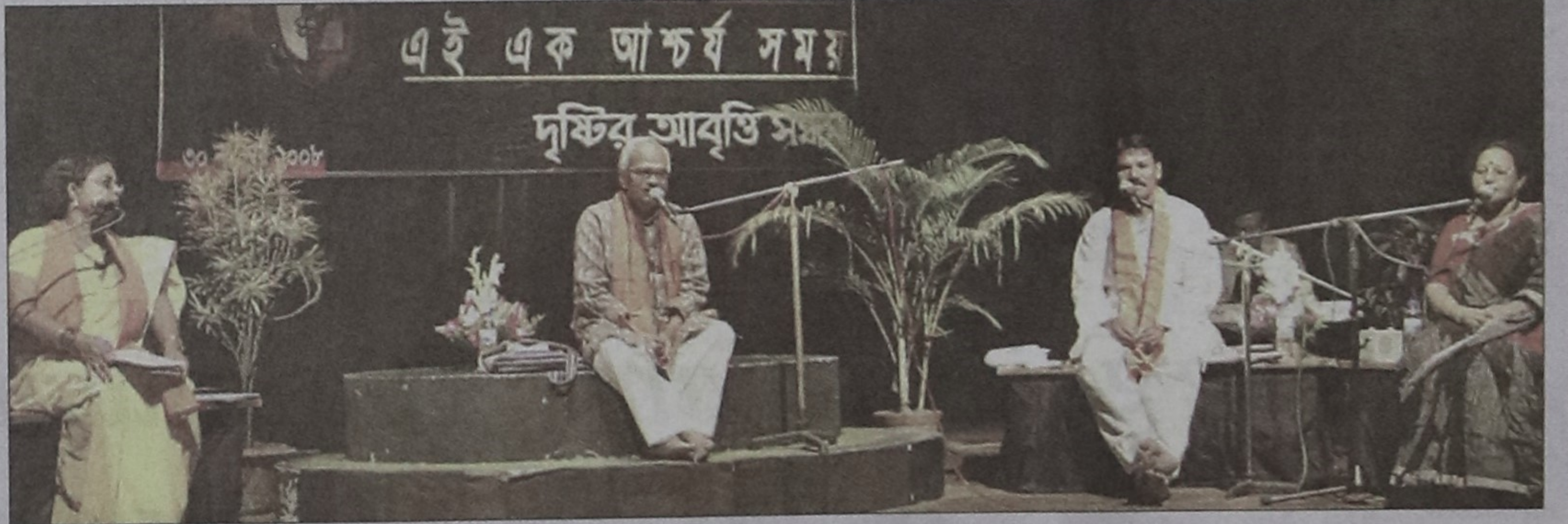
World AIDS day observed

A colourful procession was brought out and a rally was held on the occasion of World AIDS Day in the port city on Monday.

World AIDS Day-2008 Observance Committee, Chittagong organised the procession and rally.

Chittagong Division Director (Health) Dr Mohammad Rezaul Karim Chowdhury inaugurated the rally on the Civil Surgeon Office premises in the morning.

Deputy Director (Family Planning) Amir Hossain and Divisional Health Education Officer Mohammad Khairul Bashar Chowdhury were the special guests at the rally presided over by Chittagong Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Jalal Ahmed.



STAR PHOTO

(from left) Mili Chowdhury, poet Abul Momen, reciter Golam Sarwar and artiste Shilla Momen perform at a recitation programme organised by Drishti Chittagong at the Theatre Institute Chittagong (TIC) on Sunday.

Speakers at the rally called upon the non-government organisations to work side by side the government to fight the fatal diseases AIDS.

"According to report of the year 2008, around 40 lakh people in South Asia have contacted HIV and Bangladesh is also in high risk. The victims of the diseases should be protected through decreasing discrimination and ensuring proper treatment and service to the AIDS patients, they said.

Dr AQM Sirajul Islam was the key speaker at the rally while Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Programme Project Director Dr Shahana Parvin, Deputy Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Abu Toyub and Senior Health

Education Officer Mohammad Rafiqul Islam spoke it.

Reception to students

Bangladesh Shikhhak Samity awarded reception to the scholarship achievers of the year 2007 at a community centre in the city on Friday.

A total of 297 students who achieved scholarship at the primary and secondary level under Double-mooring, Bandar, Pahartali and Hallsah zone were also awarded scholarship and certificate at the ceremony.

Academician Abul Bashar Abu was the chief guest at the cere-

mony with the Samity Scholarship Committee President Mohammad Mohibullah Mian in the chair.

Prof Fazlul Haque, former principal of Haji Muhammad Mohsin College, was the key speaker at the ceremony while teachers' leaders AKM Abdul Wahab Chowdhury, Sunil Chakrabarty, Muhammad Amdadul Alam and Pradip Kanungo spoke.

'Keep electoral pledges'

Speakers at a roundtable on Sunday vowed to stand against the political leaders if they failed to

keep their electoral pledges after being elected members of parliament in the upcoming general election.

They also urged the voters to be well aware of a particular candidate before exercising their franchise on the election day.

Daily Bhoror Kagaj organised the roundtable "The ninth parliamentary election: expectations of Chittagong people" at the auditorium of Chittagong Press Club (CPC) with its editor Shyamol Dutta in the chair moderated by Bureau Chief Omar Kaiser.

"We are tired of hearing only promises from the probable candidates of all political parties during the election. Since the promises were rarely kept, we

don't want to hear those again. Nevertheless, we would forge strong resistance against the leaders who would in future fail to keep their words up," they said.

They said once elected most of the leaders used to forget their pledges they made to the people and found interested in ensuring their personal or partisan gains.

City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Awami League leader Nurul Islam B Sc, member of Forum for Planned Chittagong Zarina Hossain, General Secretary of Chittagong University Teachers Association Dr Kamrul Huda, cultural activist Munir Helal and Salma Sultana Nishi, speaker of Child Parliament, Chittagong addressed the roundtable.