

Private clinic vandalised after death of 2 patients

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Locals and relatives of two patients vandalised a private clinic in Kotchandpur upazila town following death of the two there allegedly for wrong treatment yesterday morning.

The patients, who died at the clinic, are Amena Khatun, 28, wife of Sohrab Hossain of Talshar village in Kotchandpur upazila, and Sufia Khatun, 45, wife of Sirajul Islam of Fulbari village in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah district.

Amena was admitted to Chand Private Hospital with severe appendicitis pain on February 20 while Sufia on February 21 with problems in uterus.

Amena was operated upon on the night of February 20 and Sufia Khatun on February 21. After operations, Amena and Sufia were rapidly improving, relatives claimed.

Amena's condition deteriorated after a nurse gave her an injection. She died at around 10:30. Sufia's husband alleged that she died within minutes after being injected.

Immediately after the incidents, nurses and staff fled the hospital. Being informed, relatives of the patients rushed to the hospital and went on the rampage. They along with locals damaged doors, windowpanes and medical equipment of the hospital.

Dr Kamrun Nahar, who conducted operation on Amena, told this correspondent that a date expired injection led to her death.

Sufia's physician Fazle Akbar could not be contacted as his cellphone remained off.

No case was filed with the police station concerned as of 5:00pm yesterday.

Impose ban, save mother crabs in coastal areas

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Random crab catching in the coastal areas poses threat to the species and consequently, ecological balance in the region.

In absence of any ban on catching the creatures even during the ongoing breeding season, a large number of mother crabs are being

netted, much to the worry of environmentalists and experts.

They urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to protect the creature, in view of its economic as well as ecological value.

Crabs lay eggs in the mangrove forest areas at a large scale in the breeding

period comprising January and February.

But they fall easy prey to hunting as a section of fishermen, especially those passing hard days due to poor netting of fishes during this time, engage in crab catching.

There is a government ban on catching jatka (hilsa fry) for seven months from

October 15 to May 15 every year across the country and during the time fishermen get involved in catching and sale of crabs in vast coastal areas including Patuakhali, Barguna, Bagerhat and Khulna districts, said locals.

Poachers catch crabs with the help of current nets, traps, behundee nets etc, especially when they come to the forest areas to lay eggs. One can catch 3/4 kg crabs a day and per kg crab is selling for Tk 500 to 700.

"I am catching crab here for a month and I can catch 3/4 kg daily from morning to sunset. We sell it in the local shops that are set up to especially buy crabs in the season. We don't know that crab hunting is harmful to the environment," said Umachin Rakhain of Fatraban area near Kuakata sea beach.

"Like me, many local fishermen are engaged in the business, as there is no opportunity to catch jatka from October to May," he added.

"A good number of fishermen run their family by selling crabs. We prefer catching mother crabs as it sells for high prices," said Abdul Mannan of Khajura village.

Crab wholesaler Golam Mostafa Matubar said they buy crabs from local poachers in the season when crabs are available in the areas.

"We send crabs to Dhaka and from there it is exported to different countries. Over 50 temporary shops have been set up to buy crabs from local poachers this year," he said.

Dr Khondokar Anisul Haque, a crab expert and professor of Fisheries and Marine Resource Technology Faculty of Khulna University, said, "Crabs help maintain ecological balance as it is used as food for different species of animals in the mangrove forest areas. It has also high demand as an export item but its cultivation and research has not been given due importance."

"Huge mother crabs come to mangrove forest areas to lay eggs in January and February -- the reproductive season of the crabs. The government should impose ban on catching crabs during this time to protect it from gradual depletion," he added.

Dr Wahiduzzaman, acting regional director of fisheries department in Barisal, said mangrove forest area is proper place for reproduction of crabs in the season.

According to a special law, crab poaching is prohibited only in the Sundarbans area but in absence of such law for other parts of the country including the coastal areas, a section of people are engaged in random catching of the valuable creature, he said.

He urged the higher authorities to take immediate steps in this regard.



PHOTO: STAR

Huge quantity of crabs are available at different markets in Khulna district despite ban on catching and sale of the crustaceans in the Sundarbans during the ongoing breeding period. The photo was taken from Chalna municipality area.

Crab hunting goes on unabated in Sundarbans despite ban

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Hunting of mother crabs in different rivers, creeks and canals of the Sundarbans is going on unabated, defying a ban by the Ministry of Environment and Forests during the ongoing breeding season.

January and February are considered as breeding period of crabs and authorities have imposed ban on its catching and sale in the Sundarbans during the time to protect the species.

But the restriction, even though applicable only in the Sundarbans, is hardly maintained as unauthorised hunters as well as a section of dishonest officials and employees of forest department are allegedly involved in crab hunting in different water bodies of the mangrove forest area.

The government is deprived of huge revenue due to the callous act while random hunting of mother crabs poses threat

to the species.

Several crab hunters on condition of anonymity said they catch crabs and sell it at different places in Khulna city and upazilas under the district even during the ban period as they have no other source of earning.

Now male crabs weighing 500 grams each is selling at Tk 850 per kg while those weighing 400 gram, 300 gram, 200 gram and 100 gram are selling at Tk 750, 650, 600 and 230 per kg respectively, said crab traders of Khulna city and Chalna Bazar in Dakope upazila of Khulna district.

Mother crabs weighing 180 to 200 gram is selling at Tk 750 a kg, they said.

"No one is permitted to catch crabs during January and February. We have continued our operation in water bodies of the Sundarbans to stop hunting of crabs during the breeding period," said Md Zahirul Huq, assistant conservator of forests of West Wing of Sundarbans Forest Division.



PHOTO: STAR

Remains of large trunks bear testimony to the illegal act of tree felling beside Melandaha-Mahmudpur road in Melandaha upazila of Jamalpur district a few days ago.

Trees felled by ruling party man seized

A CORRESPONDENT, JALMUPUR

Law enforcers on Wednesday seized 41 logs of ten out of 17 roadside trees, which were felled allegedly by a ruling party man a few days ago, in Melandaha upazila of the district.

The upazila administration sold 10 trees, lining the Melandaha-Mahmudpur Road at an auction on February 7. Nurullah, joint convener of Swetchchasebok League Melandaha municipal unit, won the auction as the highest bidder.

The auction committee headed by Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Tanvir Ahmed told Nurullah that he would cut only those trees that will have red marks on them.

When the Swetchchasebok League leader felled the trees, locals informed the upazila administration that people of the ruling party man cut down 17 more roadside trees and took them away.

Being informed, the UNO along with Vice-Chairman of Melandaha upazila Parishad

Haider Ali visited the road on February 17 and found that 17 more roadside trees along with the auctioned ones were felled.

As per directive of the UNO, local LGED Engineer Mobarak Hossain filed a case with Melandaha Police Station on February 21, accusing the Swetchchasebok League leader.

Police said they raided different areas in the upazila on Wednesday and seized logs of 10 of the 17 trees. Of the logs, 13 were seized from Nurullah's house in the municipality, 23 from a sawmill in Kazipara area in the municipality and the rest five from a house at Boyradanga village in the upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

Police on Wednesday seized 41 logs of roadside trees that were felled allegedly by a ruling party man in Melandaha upazila under Jamalpur district a few days ago.



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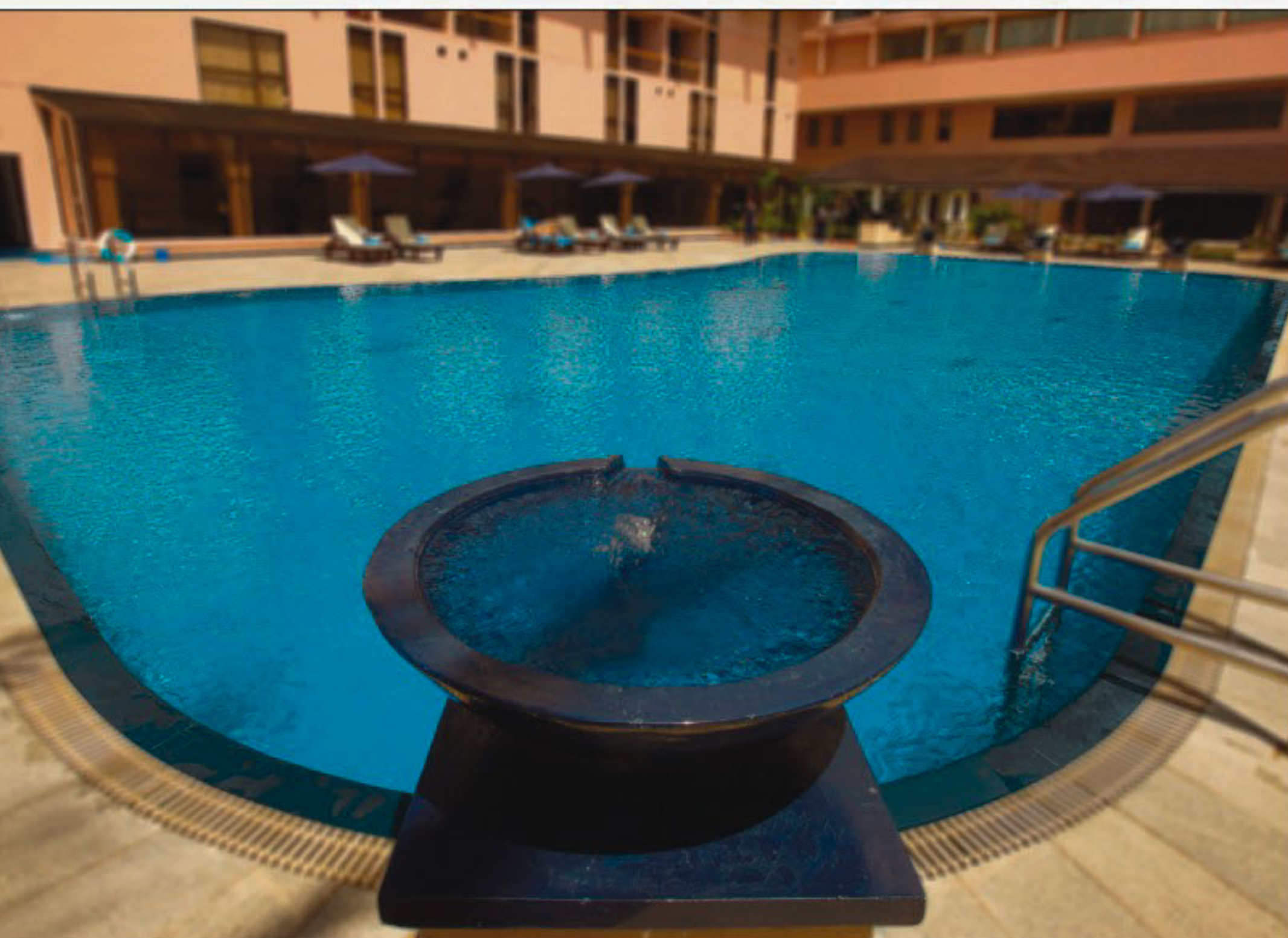
The event will be inaugurated by Fr. Felix Raj, SJ, President, SXCCAA and will be held on the 24th February at 6:30 pm, in Gulshan Club, Dhaka.

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