

Fishes spawn in Halda amid rain

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, City

Hundreds of spawn collectors with their boats and nets started collecting released eggs of indigenous species of carps from the Halda river in Chittagong for the second time this year, ignoring incessant shower yesterday morning.

The Halda, which flows through Hathazari and Raosan upazilas, is one of the world's major natural sweet water fish breeding spots.

It is also the major source of carp fishes like ruhi, katol, mrigel and kalbaush in the country.

Heavy rain accompanied by thunderbolt and strong water current from the hills create suitable atmosphere for mother fishes to release spawn in the river between April and June.

Fishermen expect that a good amount of spawn will be collected this time. Their collection was poor during the first phase of spawning in the river on April 8.

Experts believe bulk amount of eggs could not be collected during the first phase due to lack of current in the river.

Spawns collected from the Halda grow faster than other eggs nurtured in commercial hatcheries, and fishermen wait for the season every year to collect spawns by mud-madescoops.

After collecting the eggs from the river, fishermen nurture those in the mud-made pots for around 18 hours. After 96 hours, the eggs transform into fries which are then sold to the fry collectors or hatchery owners.

Halda spawns meet most of the demand for fish fries across the country, experts said.

Badiul Alam, a fisherman of Maduna Ghat, told The Daily Star yesterday that they collected very poor quantity of eggs in early April.

"At first, we thought we would not get more eggs this year. But, today, I collected five buckets of eggs from the river," he said.

He expected that fishermen would be able to collect a good amount of eggs in the second phase of spawning.

Prof Manzoorul Kibria of Zoology Department of Chittagong University told The Daily Star fishermen caught around 40 to 50 kgs of eggs per boat yesterday.

"In the first phase, only 4 to 5 kgs of spawns were collected by each boat which was very poor," he said.

Prof Kibria was monitoring spawn collection by fishermen amid heavy shower in the morning at Hathazari.

"Heavy river current and shower with thunder bolt have created congenial atmosphere for mother fishes to spawn in the second phase," the Halda researcher added.

Extending his thanks to the fisheries department and law enforcement departments for their role to prevent catching of mother fishes, he said the amount of spawn would increase in the river if the authorities concerned took proper steps against the industries which were causing pollution in the river.

Mohammad Jahed, a hatchery assistant of fisheries department, said yesterday fishermen collected good number of spawns due to suitable atmosphere in the river.

Enamul Haque Enam, officer-in-charge of Kalabagan Police Station, said the registered members laid siege to the office early yesterday and vandalised the office in phases all day long. They demanded return of their fees.

Outsourcing

FROM PAGE 1

Police have detained Khalilur Rahman Neal, chairman of company, skylanders.com.

Police brought the situation under control around 10:00pm, Enam told The Daily Star.

Khalilur said he has no intention of fleeing and some people were spreading the rumours. Khalilur claimed that he along with four other proprietors of the company collected around Tk 2.5 crore from around 22,000 members as registration fees.

CASUALTIES IN 14 YEARS		
YEAR	DEATH	INJURY
1998	3,218	2,437
1999	3,936	2,427
2000	4,246	2,297
2001	3,314	1,639
2002	4,188	2,150
2003	4,707	2,367
2004	4,317	1,859
2005	4,077	1,453
2006	3,875	1,408
2007	3,920	1,432
2008	3,918	1,431
2009	3,306	963
2010	3,236	911
2011	2,546	1,641
Total	52,804	24,405

SOURCE: ARI, POLICE

Danger lurks

FROM PAGE 1
the highway curve where the accident took place. There were no road dividers; just a dashed white line even though it was a curve, where usually a solid white line tells drivers to stick to their lanes.

On Wednesday, 12 people, including nine of a family, died when a bus trying to overtake a truck hit an oncoming microbus at Keraniganj on the outskirts of the capital. Cautious driving or a road divider there could have prevented the accident.

Last year, 12,226 vehicles of five modes were involved in accidents causing 2,546 deaths. Of the vehicles, 1,063 were buses, according to a source in the police headquarters. This year, up to April, 964 accidents took place across the country claiming 904 lives and injuring 853 others, the source said.

Prof Hasif Mohammad Ahsan of Buet's Accident Research Institute (ARI) yesterday said at the Keraniganj accident spot, there was a dashed white line in the middle of the road. Had there been a divider there, vehicles would have been forced to stay in their lanes, he said.

The ARI had revealed that 30 percent of the road accidents between 1998 and 2010, which claimed around 1,200 lives per year, could have been prevented had there been road dividers or speed bumps at the spots.

Prof Ahsan yesterday told The Daily Star that they sent their findings to the authorities concerned in 2009 on their own accord and on some occasions the authorities sought ARI's research results but little had changed.

"I believe that dividers can be installed on single carriageways, narrow dividers can be installed there," he said, adding that travellers could not be left to their fates when they were on the roads.

He believes dividers should be installed on single carriageway highways and the road should be made wider every few kilometres so that faster vehicles could pass slower ones.

ARI sources said during the last caretaker government's rule and on several other occasions, it handed over a list of accident-prone spots on 10 major highways across the county to the authorities concerned. But so far only a few spots received attention on Dhaka-Aricha highway, which has 22 such accident-prone spots.

Many Roads and Highways Department experts are reluctant to install divider on single carriageways saying that it causes tailbacks when a vehicle suffers a breakdown, ARI sources said.

Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet said, "If service roads are not introduced to highways, slow moving and fast moving vehicles will bunch up which will make fast moving vehicles overtake and consequently fast moving vehicles will go on to the wrong lane while overtaking."

Prof Shamsul Hoque, former ARI chief, said road dividers could work as a deterrent in this situation.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Director (enforcement) Tapan Kumar Sarker told The Daily Star that road dividers were the best remedy to check head-on collisions on highways.

He, however, claimed that it was not possible to install dividers on single carriageways but the authorities could install them at accident-prone stretches after widening the roads there.

He said they had been conducting a countrywide programme to create awareness among drivers so that they stop overtaking at turns, intersections and bridges and overtake safely.

Film star and Chairman of Nirapad Sarak Chai, a movement demanding safe roads, Ilias Kanchan yesterday told The Daily Star dividers compel vehicles to stay on their lanes.

He said they had been demanding such measures that ensure one-way travel of vehicles and prevent head-on collisions.

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Titans

FROM PAGE 20

Astronomers have long theorised that a clash of these galaxy titans was on the way, though it was unknown how severe it might be, or when, with guesses ranging from three to six billion years.

But years of "extraordinarily precise observations" from Nasa's Hubble Space telescope tracking the motion of the Andromeda galaxy "remove any doubt that it is destined to collide and merge with the Milky Way," Nasa said in a statement.

"It will take four billion years before the strike," it said.

After the initial impact it will take another two billion years for them "to completely merge under the tug of gravity and reshape into a single elliptical galaxy similar to the kind commonly seen in the local universe," Nasa added.

The stars inside each galaxy are so far apart that they are not likely to collide with each other, but stars will likely be "thrown into different orbits around the new galactic centre."

Scientists have long known that Andromeda, also known as M31, is moving toward the Milky Way at a speed of 250,000 miles per hour, or fast enough to travel from the Earth to the Moon in one hour.

But the nature of the crash depended on the galaxy's sideways motion in the sky, and that trajectory remained a mystery for more than 100 years until the latest analysis of Hubble's findings were revealed.

"This was accomplished by repeatedly observing select regions of the galaxy over a five- to seven-year period," said Jay Anderson of Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore.

Andromeda was first spotted as "a little cloud" by the Persian astronomer Abd-al-Rahman Al Sufi in 964.

Suranjit

FROM PAGE 1

Suranjit was speaking at a discussion "Four Decades of Independence: Expectations and Achievements" jointly organised by ptnews.com and Three Angle Marine Limited in the capital's National Press Club.

He said democracy cannot be established making the parliament ineffective. Parliament is the place where all crises should be resolved.

He called upon the opposition to come to discussion without any prior condition. Suranjit was made a minister without portfolio on April 17, a day after he had stepped down as the railway minister in the face of railwaygate scandal.

In his speech, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon expressed concern over the difficult time that journalists were passing through. The situation became worse when the state minister for home advised newsmen to keep safe distance from police.

Gono Forum presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Shirin Akhter of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, CPB acting general secretary Syed Abu Jafar Ahmed, among others, also spoke at the programme.

US naval

FROM PAGE 1

By parking its seventh fleet in a Chittagong base, the US will be able to keep an eye on China and have a strategic post in Asia as it pulls out of Afghanistan, says the report.

The US State Department has denied on record that Hillary Clinton's recent visit to Dhaka had anything to do with military co-operation.

The visit was rather strategic than friendly and India was caught unaware, Times Now said.

The Bangladesh government remains extremely tight-lipped over the developments as it has internally decided to deny it on record, fearing backlash from their own hardliners, said the report.

"This move by America could put India on the back foot if the American fleet moves to Bangladesh. All of Indian security installations will come under the American scanner...The base could cast a shadow on Indian interest," it added.

BNP waits for dialogue

FROM PAGE 1

Later, on May 20 she said the government can restore the non-party neutral government system, no matter whatever its name might be.

Party insiders said its high-ups are optimistic that the government will take the dialogue initiative as the international community has stepped up pressure on it (government) for ensuring a free, fair and participatory polls.

Several BNP leaders said they would give more time to the government to resolve the issue through discussions if the government comes forward by June 10 to hold talks with the opposition.

"The government must initiate the dialogue process. Most of the political parties, civil society members, media and even the international community want to see it. So there is no way the

government can ignore it," BNP standing committee member Tariqul Islam told The Daily Star.

If the government takes the initiative, BNP will consider it before finalising the next course of agitation programme, he added.

Party chief Khaleda Zia will declare the programme from a rally in the capital scheduled for June 11.

Contacted, another BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (retd) Mahubur Rahman said everything depends on the government. If it (government) fails to initiate the dialogue, it will put the country into a chaos.

Meanwhile, BNP and its allies have already started preparations for making the June 11 rally a success by ensuring a huge turnout of opposition supporters from across the country.

About 40 teams led by central leaders are now

visiting districts to mobilise people to join the rally.

Asked about the preparations, Tariqul said many supporters from around the country will attend the rally alongside people from the capital and its adjacent areas.

Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam recently said if BNP comes up with a formal proposal to discuss the interim government issue, his party would respond positively. But the leaders of BNP said the government must take the initiative.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UK's Foreign Office Minister for South Asia Alistair Burt during their recent visits to Dhaka had stressed the importance of dialogue on the caretaker government issue to pave way for holding a free, fair and participatory polls.

Ehsan reaches

FROM PAGE 20

Oddly, Ehsan said he never took the competition seriously in the beginning. "I first heard about it from a friend and thought it was for nerds (laughs). But I did play the online game a couple of times out of whim," he added.

But that was enough for him to make the cut for the divisional round. "I scored around 70 in the online round which I thought was pretty low but one day my teacher told me 'Ehsan, you qualified for the divisional round' and I was shocked," he said.

Barely making it, Ehsan picked up his game in the divisional round doing well enough to secure a place in the top 72 for the TV round. "The magnitude of the event caught my eye and I was determined to do well here. My family was very encouraging and supportive especially my two elder sisters," he said.

Ehsan admitted that the Spelling Bee has had a massive impact on his life. "People in my school now recognise me because of the Spelling Bee. I am representing my school after all. My friends and their parents often come to congratulate me. Once a guy on the street came up to me and said 'Hey I saw you on TV' and that certainly felt great."

Ehsan's recently discovered penchant for spelling has certainly given him recognition as well as self-confidence to take on the more daunting tasks in life that lie ahead. "I'd like to become an engineer, maybe go to study abroad and then come back to do something for the country. The Spelling Bee has certainly given me the confidence to chase my dreams."

But for now, he would like to take things one step at a time and not look too far ahead. "I'm often labelled as a bit of an all-rounder by my friends because I'm active in a lot of extracurricular activities. I like to play the guitar, play football and basketball and am also part of the school debate team. I like to keep myself occupied," Ehsan said.

It is Ehsan's confidence and swagger that make him a potential threat in the grand finale.

To watch four more finalists join Ehsan and Namira, tune in Channel 1 every Wednesday and Thursday at 7:50pm for the exciting semifinal episodes.

Nishat, Mohit

FROM PAGE 20

certificates of their success and confirm plane tickets, Mohit told The Daily Star over the phone.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal Nim Chandra Bhowmik, Plan Nepal Country Director Donal Kean, Everest Women Seven Summits Eco-Action coordinator Sailee Basnet, among others, were present at the reception.

"We have already applied for certificates and hope to receive those on Sunday. We will also confirm our plane ticket tomorrow (Saturday)," said Nishat. She hoped to reach Dhaka by Monday or Tuesday.

Nishat scaled Mt Everest on May 19 to become the first Bangladeshi woman to conquer the world's highest peak.

Meanwhile, another Bangladeshi Everest conqueror Wasfia Nazreen reached Lukla yesterday.

"I will try to collect extra money to arrange a special helicopter. If I can manage it tonight [Friday night], I will fly to Kathmandu tomorrow," she told this newspaper.

She scaled Mt Everest on May 26 as the second Bangladeshi woman.

Nishat and Mohit will today visit the Rum Doodle, an Italian restaurant in Kathmandu. All the Mt Everest conquerors put their signatures in its register book as part of a tradition.

Although the Bangladesh embassy plans to host a reception programme for the mountaineers on Monday, Mohit said they will request the authorities to arrange the programme earlier as they are eagerly waiting to return home as early as possible.

Mohit is the first Bangladeshi to have climbed the mountain peak twice. He had reached the mountain peak on May 21 last year.

Musa Ibrahim, the first Bangladeshi to achieve the feat, had conquered the

Muhith suggests slashing ADP

FROM PAGE 1

"We undertake many projects unnecessarily and spread the allocation," he wrote. "This tendency must stop. The number of projects has to be cut down with an iron fist."

He added, "I think a high-powered experts committee should be given the task. A similar initiative in 1982-83 was very successful."

The finance minister in his letter also said a project involving more than Tk 25 crore is simply not acceptable without a feasibility study.

He said a master plan has to be prepared for road construction under the communications and LGRD and cooperatives ministries.

Muhith also suggested prioritising the repair and maintenance of the existing roads.

He said new roads might not be built, but toll-based

alternative roads could be constructed under public-private partnerships.

Talking to The Daily Star last week, the planning secretary said the ministry already had 720 unapproved projects and the viability of those would have to be reviewed.

The number of projects in the original ADP increases by over 200 during revision every year.

In the current fiscal year, 1,038 projects were included in the original ADP. But after revision, the number rose to 1,228.

Besides, a list of 531 new projects without allocation has been attached, and from there more projects will be included in the ADP and small allocations disbursed by the end of the current fiscal year.

Similarly, a list of 720 projects without allocation has been attached to the next

fiscal year's ADP that already has 1,037 projects.

A planning ministry high official said that when funds are inadequate and projects numerous, allocations are bound to be small. This all leads to slow implementation of the projects.

In March, the Implementation Monitoring Evaluation Division came up with a report on 214 projects completed in FY 2009-10.

According to the report, the rise in expenditure of 76 projects ranged between 9 percent and 2,696 percent. The implementation tenure had to be extended for 160 projects and the highest extension was 500 percent.

Citing the IMED evaluation report, a planning ministry official said that undertaking projects without study and including additional projects are two major reasons why expenditure and

4 arrested, case filed

FROM PAGE 20

However, of the four, only Iran was accused in the case. Nazmul alleged that Kaliganj police did not allow him to name Sub-Inspector Nripen Chandra Dey as an accused in the case. He claimed that Nripen "handed over" Mamun to criminals who hacked him to death.

Enayet Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, however, denied the allegation. He claimed that Nazmul had prepared the case statement beforehand and that the police only accepted the case.

He said SI Nripen would be arrested anyway as his name was mentioned in the case statement, though not as an accused.

On the evening of May 29, SI Nripen of Kaliganj Police Station and some other policemen handcuffed Mamun and put him in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, the case statements say.

At Ramchandrapur village of Kaliganj upazila, the SI handed Mamun over to a group of criminals, including Hakim Farazi and Jahangir

Drug peddlers

FROM PAGE 20

Atiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Rugganj police station, quoting locals said a group of alleged illegal drug sellers broke into Babul's house and began to stab him indiscriminately.

When locals rushed to the spot after hearing Babul's screams, the criminals sensing their presence fired around four blank shots and fled the scene.

Locals rushed critically injured Babul to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors pronounced him dead, said the OC.

Protesting Babul's murder, agitated locals vandalised and set fire to six houses of the alleged criminals.

Soon after the incident, police arrested three drug peddlers Sohel, 32, Masud, 26, and Hashem, 45, from the area who were believed to be involved in the killing.

Babul, who was an active member of an anti-drug campaign, earned drug traders' anger for his role against selling of illegal drugs in the area, said the OC.

Besides, about 20 days ago, while conducting a drive at Chonpara slum in the same upazila, four officials of Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) in plain clothes were critically injured after being stabbed by drug peddlers.

BCL leader

FROM PAGE 20

Police said there was a longstanding enmity between two factions of BCL over establishing supremacy at the institute.

At about 9:30pm, a student of the institute called Sohel out of his home at Kashinathpur village in the upazila and took him to Balarampur area, sources said.

A group of activists of the rival faction shot and stabbed him indiscriminately there, they added.

Later, local people found his body lying on Comilla-Coatbari road in an unconscious state.

They rushed him to Comilla Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Yet another fatal crash

FROM PAGE 1

Iftiza's brothers Murtoza Hossain, 65, Shefayetul Alam, 50, Shahin Alam, 38, and microbus driver Md Shahjahan.

Hosne Ara and the driver died on the spot while the others succumbed to their injuries at Dulahazara Christian Memorial Hospital, Khalequzzaman said.

Iftiza's sisters Irine Akhter, 36, Mobaroka Begum, 56, and Shahin Alam's wife Masuma Afrin, 32, were admitted to the hospital with severe injuries and later moved to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Locals said Iftiza with eight other family members had left for Feni on the rental microbus around 6:00am to attend a wedding.