

# Mindless catching depletes small indigenous fishes

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

With water receding from flood plane and low lying areas, the end of the rainy season sees widespread catching of small indigenous fishes, including young ones, much to the harm of fish stock in different areas of the district.

According to district fisheries office sources, there are 48,000 hectares of flood plane and 56,327 hectares of open water bodies including 176 beels (large water bodies) in the district.

During the rainy season, various fishes including indigenous ones enter the flood planes and beels where they breed and grow up by eating natural foods.

Different kinds of local fishes including dankina, tithi, puti, dela, chalia, chang lata, balitura, ektuta kakila, elong, kuksa, hiralo, chabchela, anju, modu dankina, bata, tatkini, sor puti, kanchon puti, jili puti, jat puti, teri puti, kala bata, panga, phari gutum, rani, puma, rita, sing, magur, pabda, bash pata, bacha, kaliara, chanda, naftani, koi, baicha, gura chanda, meni, bailla, naptani, and baim have already become rare here.

District fisheries office released 445 kg fry of small indigenous fishes at open water body during last rainy season to help their breeding and protect the species from extinction.

The authorities also released 4,653 kg of fry of different varieties of big fishes to increase the fish production in the district. Four billboards were also erected to create awareness among the common people.

The villagers were also asked not to catch fish fry



PHOTO: STAR

**Indiscriminate catching of fishes, including small indigenous ones from open water bodies, especially during recession of water at the end of the rainy season, badly affects the species. The photo was taken from a flood plain in Shahjadapur union of Sarail upazila under Brahmanbaria district recently.**

and not to use current net for fishing. But they hardly follow the instruction.

During visit to several spots in the district, this correspondent found the villagers indiscriminately catching different kinds of fishes with nets, traps, hooks and rods. The children were seen catching fishes by making several holes under knee deep water in the mud where the fish take shelter after being chased by the kids in large area covered with knee deep water.

According to district fisheries office sources, 42,248 tonnes of fishes are produced

in the district but the present demand is a bit higher.

Of the amount, 15,615 tonnes come from open water bodies but indiscriminate fishing leaves the fish stock in a vulnerable position.

To protect the small indigenous fishes by providing them suitable environment for breeding, two fish sanctuaries have been set up in Titas River - one near Kainchonpur Bazar in Sadar upazila and the other at Kagmari village under Banchharampur upazila.

However, no such initiative has been taken in seven other upazilas under the district.

A section of unscrupulous



villagers secretly catch fish even from the fish sanctuaries, hampering fish breeding.

"Once we caught huge amount of small indigenous fishes as well as a good number of big fishes by boat from Beel Shapla but it is only a dream now. Still the government earns over Tk 15 lakh yearly revenue from the fishermen who take lease of the beel," said Probhat Chandra Das, a fisherman of Shahjadapur village.

"We are gradually being dependent on farm fishes like pangas and telapia because small indigenous fishes are being exhausted due to ran-

dom fishing by people. Besides, some 'hunter' fishes like Thai magur and piranha causes immense harm to the fish stock," Porimal Das, a village doctor, said.

To prevent illegal catching of fish including fry, at least eight mobile courts were set up during last rainy season and 70,000 metres of current net were burnt, said Sawpon Kumar Sarker, district fisheries officer.

Gradually all the upazilas of the district will be taken under the fish sanctuary project to save all kinds of small indigenous fishes and the young ones of big fishes, he said.

# Pabna Jubo League leader murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A local Jubo League leader was stabbed to death by criminals in the district town yesterday.

The deceased was identified as district Jubo League vice-president Mahfuzur Rahman Mafu, 32, son of Mansur Rahman of Chak Pailenpur in Sadar upazila.

Mafu was a contractor by profession.

Quoting family sources police said, two local boys called Mafu out of his father-in-law's house at about 9:00pm Saturday. They took him to Krisnapur High School and stabbed him mercilessly.

Later, the criminals



Mahfuzur Rahman Mafu

admitted seriously injured Mafu to Pabna Medical College Hospital at about 11:30pm and fled the scene.

As his condition deteriorated Mafu was referred to Dhaka. But he succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka at about 2:30am yesterday.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report yesterday afternoon.

Locals said, there had been a longstanding conflict between two rival AL factions, one led by Rajib commissioner and the other by Mafidul Islam Bagha. Mafu belonged to Bagha faction.

An internal feud was brewing in the factions in the last few weeks over capturing contracts for business in the area, they said.

Mafu might be a victim of intra-party rivalry over business, police said, adding that they were investigating the reason behind the killing.

## 3 farmers injured in BSF firing

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Three Bangladeshi farmers were shot and injured allegedly by the members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Chakpara border in Shibganj upazila yesterday morning.

The injured were identified as Setabul Islam, 45, Sayem, 30, and Saidur, 32, of Unish Bighi village.

Lt Col Monzurul Alam of BGB Battalion-9 said the BSF men of Naoda camp opened fire on a group of farmers while they were working in their field at about 7:00am, leaving the trio injured.

## Youth killed by cousin

UNB, Manikganj

A youth was stabbed to death allegedly by his cousin over piece of disputed land at Charamgara village in Singair upazila on Saturday night.

The dead was identified as Alamgir Hossain, 22, son of Habibur Rahman of the village.

Family sources said there was a longstanding conflict between Alamgir and his cousin Fazlul Haque of the village over sharing of paternal property.

In a sequel to the enmity, they locked in an altercation in the evening. At one stage, Fazlul stabbed Alamgir indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured.

Alamgir succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

**Mother and relatives of Saif, inset, wait on hearing the news of the boy's murder by kidnapers.**

## Youth kidnaps, kills employer's kid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An eight-year-old schoolboy was murdered allegedly by a kidnapper in Kaliganj upazila town yesterday within an hour of the incident.

Police arrested Shakil Hossain, 20, son of Mobasser Hossain of Sundarpur village in connection with the killing.

The dead was identified as Arafat Hossain Saif, son of medicine trader Nur Hossain Lotus, of Kaliganj Thanapara in the town. The boy was a class three student at Kaliganj Shishu Academy.

Saif's father said his son went to school yesterday morning and since remained missing.

The boy got on to the motorbike of employee my Shakil after the classes were

over at about 10:25am, said Lotus, quoting Saif's cousin Tamim, a class three student at the institution.

When Shakil returned to my residence without Shakil, we interrogated him. At one stage, he confessed to killing Saif and dumping his body in a sugarcane field at Helai village, Lotus said.

"Shakil often took Saif to school and brought him back home. Yesterday, instead of returning to shop, he took Saif from the school and killed him," Lotus further said.

Sayed Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge at Kaliganj police station, said on information, police recovered the body from the sugarcane field at about 11:30am.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately, said the OC.

## DOWRY AND OTHER REASONS

# 3 housewives murdered

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Three housewives were killed allegedly by their in-laws in Rangpur, Kurigram and Khulna districts on Friday.

A housewife was set on fire allegedly by her husband and mother-in-law for dowry at Khamar Mokinpur Chowdhury Gopalpur village under Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur, reports our correspondent.

Rasheda Begum, 22, is now fighting for life at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Family members of the victim said, Iqbal Hossain, son of Liakat Hossain of the village married Rasheda, daughter of Monsur Ali of Kochakata village under Nageswari upazila in Kurigram district three years ago.

During the marriage, Iqbal and his family members demanded Tk. 66,000 as dowry.

The family members of Rasheda gave them Tk. 16,000 during the marriage and promised to give the rest amount as soon as possible.

But soon after the marriage, Iqbal and his family members started torturing Rasheda for the dowry money.

On Friday at about 8:00pm, Iqbal and his family members asked Rasheda to bring the money from her parents.

As Rasheda said that her poor father could not arrange it, Iqbal and his mother Peyara Begum started to beat Rasheda.

When Rasheda became senseless, Iqbal and his mother poured kerosene on Rasheda and set her on fire, leaving her critically injured.

Hearing her scream, neighbours rescued

Rasheda and took her to Mithapukur Upazila Health Complex.

Later she was referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital on Saturday.

In Kurigram, a housewife was killed allegedly by her in-laws at Nilur Khamar Charuatari village in Nageshwari upazila on Friday evening.

The deceased was identified as Rohila Begum, 45, wife of Shah Alam of the village, reports UNB.

Police said there had been a longstanding dispute between Rohila's husband Shah Alam and his sister Momena Khatun over the ownership of a piece of land.

In a sequel to the dispute, Rohila locked in a quarrel with Momena at about 5:30pm.

At one stage, Mominul, son of Momena Khatun, hit Rohila with a crowbar in the chest, leaving her dead on the spot.

In Khulna, police recovered the body of a housewife at Chokuni village in Koira upazila on Friday night.

The housewife was Chandana Rani, 19, wife of Joydev of the village.

Victim's father Gobinda Sarker claimed that Chandana was strangled by her in-laws for dowry but her husband's family said Chandana committed suicide.

Sub-inspector Nasiruddin of Koira police station said the housewife might have been murdered as there were several marks of injury on her hand and neck.

Her husband Joydev went into hiding soon after the incident, police said.



PHOTO: STAR

**Carpenters give finishing touches to their palm tree made country boats, locally called dunga, at Tularampur Bazar in Narail Sadar upazila as the market, famous for sale of the traditional boats, attracts customers from different areas following swelling of water bodies due to downpour for days during the fag end of the rainy season.**

## Dunga still going strong

PONUEL S BOSE, Narail

Chachuri, Maijpara and Tularampur haats (markets in rural areas) in the district are again buzzing with activities as dunga, a small boat made of palm trees, is on good sale there following heavy downpour during the fag end of the rainy season.

Famous for the traditional country boat, the three haats attract customers from different areas of Narail as well as neighbouring Jessore, Faridpur, Khulna, Magura and Gopalganj districts, especially during the rainy season when water bodies like khals, beels and haors are full of water.

Rural people use dunga for movement to short distances and collect water lily and snails. It comes of great help to shift marooned people to safer places during the rainy season.

The carpenters of Char Shalikh

and Ramsiddhi villages under Narail Sadar upazila make a large number of dungas and sell it mainly in the three haats.

Two dungas can be made by splitting a palm tree.

Usually 12 to 13 feet long, a dunga sells for Tk 3,000 to 5,000.

Visiting Tularampur haat a couple of days ago, this correspondent found hundreds of dungas kept in a queue for sale. Buyers were making choice and bargaining to buy the item.

Some carpenters were giving finishing touch to the boats.

"I have been making dunga for over 25 years. I can make a dunga in two days. But due to sharp decrease of palm trees during the last few years we have to buy it for high prices. As a result, the price of dunga has gone up too," said Bodiar Sheikh, 65, of Ramsiddhi village.

Rahman Mia, 50, of Char Shalikh village said he learnt to make dunga from his father and now his son and other family members help him in the job. He expressed happiness as he had sold a few dungas for good prices.

"We need this type of water transport to go to the neighbouring houses, to catch fish and to collect shapla (water lily) from the beels. But its price has increased this year," said Soilendranath Biswas, 50, who came from Faridpur to buy dunga.

During the Bangla months of Ashar, Sravan, Bhadra and Ashwin, dunga is in full demand as water bodies remain full of water.

Once many types of boats including tabure, dingi and goina were available in Narail and adjacent areas. But their use has sharply declined due to siltation of water bodies and increase of road transport facility.