



The Coast Guard and the fisheries department in joint drives yesterday confiscated over 3,000 kilograms of hilsa fry on the Dhaleshwari near Kathpatti of Munshiganj and at Dholagaon Bazar. The hilsa, which swim upstream from the sea to breed, are threatened when fries are caught. The government has banned the capture and sale of hilsa fry to protect the national fish. Yesterday, three people were arrested and fined Tk 5,000 each for catching and selling hilsa fry. The confiscated hilsa fry were later donated to orphanages and madrasas.

PHOTO: STAR

Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1
fill the initial storage. The river flow remains higher at that time and water in excess of use in the field spills over the dam. Later, the spill stops in February-March as water use increases.

The average dry season depth of the flow of the Halda river is only 300 mm. Had the two rubber dams not been built, this additional half-meter depth of water would meet the tidal cycles.

Also, if the volume of dry season water that would be available during a tide cycle from not building the two rubber dams is compared with the volume of tidal prism that enters from the Karnaphuli past Madunaghat, the former counts for only 0.14% of the latter -- a trifling fraction that is unable to cause any impact on salinity propagation process at Madunaghat.

Regarding the operational aspect of the Bhujpur dam, the LGED rejoinder signed by the additional chief engineer said as per the memo issued by the agriculture ministry, the Halda rubber dam was deflated on May 2, 2013, impacted the fish spawning which is unusual as the Boro rice is harvested by the end of March and the dams are deflated. If it is so then we have to look into the operational aspects of the dams and we are pretty sure that we should be able to come up with a solution, making the dams operationally friendly for both rice and fish.

The LGED did not conduct any Environment Impact Assessment

(EIA) before constructing the dams. So it is not clear how it came to know that the salinity at the mouth of the Karnaphuli, which increased after the construction of the dams, was not due to the impact of those dams.

The department conducted a feasibility study only after the Bhujpur dams came into operation.

Also, in the rejoinder the LGED itself admitted that the dry season flow of the river is very thin, less than half a meter in depth. But still those dams absolutely stopped the flow of the river, leaving around a five kilometre stretch of the Halda completely dry, which would destroy the ecology of the river.

The rejoinder also conceded that the dams are being operated in an unfriendly way for fish.

Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995 (2010 amendment), clearly mentions that the authorities concerned must conduct an EIA before taking up any development projects. The law also prohibits stopping, diverting or preventing the natural flow of a river.

In our report, it was clearly mentioned how the production of fish egg in the river dropped by 60 percent last year to 624 kg from 1,559 kg in 2012, within one year of the Bhujpur dams coming into operation. But the LGED in its rejoinder made no mention of the impact on the production of fish eggs.

Even the fisheries ministry in February formed a 12-member inter-ministerial committee composed of government officials to make recommendations about the situation of the river.

Tests for Modi, Sonia

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photographs of Modi with one Afroz Phatta, a diamond trader who was recently arrested for his alleged involvement in illegal money transactions.

The BJP responded by posting on the website a photo purportedly featuring Phatta and Congress lawmaker Mohd Azharuddin, the former Indian cricket captain.

Congress had trashed allegations against Vadra and said the BJP felt "nervous" at Priyanka Gandhi's campaigning.

The seventh phase will see polling in 89 constituencies across seven states, including all 26 seats in Gujarat, whose chief minister is Modi, 13 in Punjab, 17 in the proposed new state of Telangana and two federally-administered territories, with a total of over 1,000 candidates in the fray.

While Modi is in fray in the seventh phase from Vadodara constituency in Gujarat, Sonia Gandhi is seeking re-election from Rae Bareilly constituency in Uttar Pradesh state, where Priyanka Gandhi took up the cudgels on her mother's behalf.

The electoral fate of BJP patriarch L K Advani and BJP President Rajnath Singh will also be decided in today's round of polling in Lucknow, capital city of Uttar Pradesh, and Gandhinagar city of Gujarat.

Other prominent leaders who are in the fray in the seventh phase are federal minister Farooq Abdullah from Srinagar, BJP veterans Murli Manohar Joshi in Kanpur and Janata Dal President Sharad Yadav from Madhepura in Bihar state.

Polling has already been held in 349 of the altogether 543 Lok Sabha constituencies since April 10 before two rounds of voting are held in the eighth and ninth and final lap on May 12, four days before the votes are counted.

Mocking Rahul Gandhi, Modi dubbed the Congress vice-president as a specimen for his "little knowledge" of Gujarat.

Addressing a rally in Kheralu in Gujarat, Modi said Gandhi's claim of vast job vacancies and lokayukta smacked of ignorance, and was short on facts. His speeches were good stress-busters, he said.

Rahul hit back with force, question-

ing Modi's ties with the leading industrial house Adani Group and alleging Modi government in Gujarat handed over land worth thousands of crores of rupees at throw-away prices to the industrial group.

While the BJP ridiculed Rahul's frequent visits to socially backward caste homes and having food there, the latter asked whether it was wrong to ask Dalits about their problems and wrong to meet or hug them.

A day after Farooq Abdullah said Kashmir would not be part of a "communal India" and those voting for Modi should drown in the sea. Modi hit back by alleging the biggest blow to secularism in India was delivered in Kashmir by the Abdullah family when Kashmiri Hindus were forced out of the state due to their religion.

Modi also charged Farooq's son and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the latter's grandfather Sheikh Abdullah of communalising Kashmir for political gains.

Omar took on Modi by accusing him of twisting history and dared him to visit Kashmir and seek votes.

Unleashing a vicious attack on Modi, who questioned the "big money" fetched by her paintings, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee labelled the BJP's PM nominee a "devil and a bloodthirsty rioter" and "butcher" of Gujarat, referring to the riots that left more than 1,000 dead, mostly Muslims, in the western state 12 years ago.

The country would be "ruined" if Modi came to power in India and the "architect" of the Gujarat riots would drench Bengal in an "ocean of blood" after drenching Gujarat "in a river of blood", she alleged in Kolkata on Monday evening.

The Mamata-led Trinamool Congress party demanded a public apology from Modi for doubting the integrity of Banerjee.

On Modi's allegation she was indulging in vote-bank politics ignoring non-Bengalis and laying on the red carpet for Bangladeshis, Banerjee said he [Modi] did not know history.

"He is polarising Bengalis and non-Bengalis. After shedding blood in Gujarat, does he want to unleash bloodbath in Bengal...," Mamata asked.

SP, Rab commander, 2 OCs may be withdrawn

FROM PAGE 1
The recommendations came in the wake of frequent abductions in Narayanganj.

Earlier in the day, the state minister for home said there was no reason to panic about abductions.

He was talking to journalists after a programme at a hotel in the capital.

Replying to a query, he said, "The government is not embarrassed. If you look back to previous years, you will see that such incidents had happened. Our administration and law enforcement agencies are working on it."

Meanwhile in Noakhali, a union-level BNP leader was kidnapped yesterday, but was freed within five hours.

Two armed men abducted Abul Hossain, 65, president of Eojbalia union BNP, near his home at Khalifar Haat under Noakhali Sadar upazila around 9:00am, said Abul's son-in-law Bachchu Mia.

The captors released him five hours later at Islamganj, some six kilometres from where he was picked up. Later, police took him to Sudharam Police Station for quizzing.

Abul alleged that local criminal Liton and his cohorts had kidnapped him over previous enmity. Liton was behind bars for two years in a case lodged by Abul regarding land.

The abduction in Noakhali occurred a day after four people were

kidnapped in Gazipur and Bhaluka of Mymensingh. Earlier on Sunday, seven people, including a senior lawyer and a ward councillor, were abducted in two incidents around same time in Narayanganj.

Two Gazipur victims were freed 18 hours after their abduction, while two abducted from Bhaluka and seven from Narayanganj are still missing.

One of the Gazipur victims, Din Mohan Mandol, yesterday said the abductors took them in a microbus without blindfolding them.

"They drove for an hour and changed the vehicle. At one point, one of them called someone over the phone and said they were in Nabinagar near Ashulia. Later, they kept us in a dark room," Din told a press briefing at Gazipur police headquarters.

Abdul Baten, superintendent of Gazipur police, said the captors were on police radar and would be arrested soon.

In Narayanganj, followers of Nazrul Islam, the abducted councillor of ward-2, blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Mouchak area of Siddhirganj for the third straight day yesterday, demanding that law enforcers rescue him and his four aides.

Traffic was halted on the busy road for about two hours from 10:45am.

The demonstrators also demanded the arrest of Awami League leaders Nur Hossain and Mohammad Yasin, who have been accused in a case filed in this

connection.

They withdrew the blockade following assurances from Abdul Matin, officer-in-charge of Siddhirganj Police Station.

Nazrul's wife Selina Islam alleged that Nur Hossain, councillor of ward-4, and Haji Mohammad Yasin, general secretary of Siddhirganj AL, had masterminded the abduction of her husband.

She filed a case against Nur, Yasin and four others on Monday.

Nur Hossain, also vice-president of Siddhirganj AL, refuted the allegation.

The five were kidnapped from Adalatpara area of Narayanganj city around 1:45pm on Sunday.

Meanwhile, members of Narayanganj District Bar Association boycotted the District Judge's Court yesterday, demanding the rescue of senior advocate Chandan Sarkar and his driver Ibrahim, abducted on Sunday.

They also submitted a memorandum to the Narayanganj deputy commissioner's office on the same demand.

In Mymensingh, police were yet to trace coaching centre tutors Kamal Hossain Sabuj, 35, and Abu Bakar Siddique Swapan, 28.

Mohammad Moniruzzaman, OC (investigation) of Bhaluka Police Station, said the police were conducting operations in and outside the district to trace the tutors.

In Chittagong, Rapid Action Battalion-7 rescued two persons and arrested five abductors, including two women, from a house at Panwala Para around 11:30am Monday.

The arrestees are Mohammad Harun, 30, Mohammad Arif, 22, Mohammad Mamun, 28, Sanjida, 18, and Bristi Akhter, 20.

Rab-7 Assistant Director Mafijul Islam said the five were involved in abduction of Osman Gani Badsha and Abul Hossain from Choumuhani Intersection of Agrabad around 6:30am that day.

TWO MISSING FOR WEEK
Police could not trace two other people kidnapped a week ago in Bhaluka upazila and Mymensingh town.

Elias Ali, an employee of Islami Bank in Mymensingh, was abducted on April 21 when he along with a colleague was returning home at Gulpukurpar after offering Esha prayers at a nearby mosque, said police.

An abduction case was lodged with Kotwali Police Station the following day.

Another victim, Yusuf Ali, a student at Mymensingh Homoeopathic Medical College, was abducted by a gang of seven to eight people from his residence in Bhaluka upazila early on April 20.

(Our correspondents in Noakhali, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Mymensingh and Chittagong contributed to this report)

Brutal attack at RU

FROM PAGE 16
As soon as they had reached in front of Ziaur Rahman Hall, 10-12 unidentified youths waylaid them, he told The Daily Star at the NICVD.

"As we tried to run away, they caught Masud first and then me. They started hacking us indiscriminately with machetes. One of them also shot three times at me but I luckily escaped," he said.

Saleh said he had never seen the attackers on the campus before. "Probably, they are Shibir cadres and came from elsewhere."

He added that he and Masud had beaten up Madar Bux Hall unit Shibir president Waliullah Mahmud on Sunday

and handed him over to police.

"The Shibir president had threatened us with dire consequences," he said, adding that they were active against Shibir activities on the campus.

On hearing their screams, on-duty police at Ziaur Rahman Hall rescued the victims and rushed them to the RMCH.

The assailants completely severed Masud's right ankle and cut the tendons of his left leg. The attackers also cut tendons of both hands and legs of Saleh.

Both the BCL men were seen bandaged almost all over their bodies.

Nirmal Kanti Dey, resident surgeon of the NICVD, said, "The victims sustained hack injuries in different parts of their bodies."

They were sent to the National Institute of Traumatology and Rehabilitation (Nitor) for better treatment, he added.

Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Motihar Police Station in Rajshahi, said Shibir activists had carried out the attack to "establish supremacy on the campus".

Mizanur Rahman Rana, president of RU BCL, told The Daily Star that Shibir men had attacked the two for they were "active against Shibir's conspiracy".

Contacted, Shoyeb Shahriar, organising secretary of Shibir's RU unit, claimed the attack was the outcome of the BCL's internal feuds.

Police conducted several raids on

private messes at Dharampur, Mirzapur and Binodpur areas near the university and detained 15 Shibir men in connection with the attack, the Motihar OC said.

Leaders and activists of the RU unit BCL brought out a procession on the campus demanding immediate arrest of the attackers and ban on Shibir.

RU Proctor Prof Tarikul Hasan told The DailyStar that additional police force was deployed on the campus following the incident.

At least 13 leaders and activists of the RU BCL fell victim to the brutal acts of cutting tendons in last five years and at least seven of them suffered permanent physical impairment.

Jamaat man killed

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dead at Debhata Upazila Health Complex.

Two police constables were also injured in the gunfight, he said.

Sirajul was wanted in three murder cases, including one for the murder of ruling Awami League leader Abu Raihan, the OC informed.

Sirajul's son Manirul Islam said his father was a vegetable vendor and was involved in Jamaat's politics. He alleged his father was picked up by police on Monday night only to be found dead yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, the district unit Jamaat yesterday enforced a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Satkhira protesting against a raid by police on a Shibir-operated mess in the town on Friday during which Shibir general secretary Aminur Rahman was killed and seven others were bullet-hit.

Activities at Bhomra Land Port went on normally and no major incident was

reported elsewhere during the hartal, reports our Satkhira correspondent.

BENAPOLE SHOOTOUT
Shibir leaders Ruhul Amin, general secretary of Jessore western region unit, and Abul Kashem, president of Benapole municipality unit, were injured in a 'gunfight' with police at Shikri village yesterday, adds our Benapole correspondent.

Apurba Hasan, officer-in-charge of Benapole Port police, said they had conducted a drive at Mahishdanga village and arrested Ruhul and Kashem at midnight.

He claimed a police van carrying the two had come under attack of Shibir activists at Shikri Battola. As the force returned the fire, a 'gunfight' ensued, leaving Ruhul and Kashem injured.

Sub-inspectors Shafiqul Islam and Humayun Kabir were also injured in the 'gunfight' and were admitted to Jessore Medical College Hospital, said the police, adding, a pistol and two bullets were recovered.