

# What is killing Vietnamese koi?

SHYKH SERAJ

Over the past fifteen years, Bangladeshi pisciculture has undergone a revolution, bringing the nation to fourth position globally in the farming of freshwater fish. For the last several years, koi fish, first Thai koi and subsequently 'all female' koi, have shared centre stage; but from three years ago it was Vietnamese koi that took the mantle of most exciting koi breed, with the promise of the highest profits. The Vietnamese koi industry has blossomed since, without a hitch, until now.

This year, Vietnamese koi farmers have lost millions of taka. To find out exactly what is going on, I spoke with the pisciculturalists of Mymensingh, the district that has long been one step ahead of others in freshwater fish production.

"I couldn't sell any fish yet," says pisciculturalist Rahim of Mymensingh's Fulbari upazila. "All the adult koi are dead, only the small ones are left."

His colleague Jabbar from Mymensingh Sadar upazila says he started with approximately 350,000 Vietnamese koi fry but only around 50,000 have survived.

In nearby Trishal upazila, Jamil tells of similar woes. "When the fish were only a month old they started to die. On many a morning I found dead koi floating."

The problem is not unique to Mymensingh. In far-off Jessore, Vietnamese koi farmers have lost nearly 500 million taka district-wide.

"I think a virus is responsible," says Rabiul from Jessore Sadar's Barmanpara, personally nearly 20 million taka worse off.

As yet, no one is entirely sure what disease is wreaking the havoc. Nor is it clear where the malady is coming from. Some farmers blame fish feed companies for mixing antibiotics and growth promoters into their products while others believe the source lies with contaminated fry.

In support of the former theory are reports of better results when fish feed is withdrawn. "When we stopped adding fish feed," says Idris of Mymensingh's Muktagachha, "instance of disease also ceased. Whenever I start adding the feed the deaths recom-



PHOTO: STAR

## Fisheries officials accompanied by agriculture development activist Shykh Seraj examine dead Vietnamese koi fish at a farm in Mymensingh district. Inset, some of the dead fish.

me."

Yet commercial fish food production companies have ruled out the feed as the problem's source. "If fish are given feed when they're already sick," says the marketing manager of Mega Foods Ltd, Kamrul Islam, "they'll suffer digestive problems."

Many farmers have tried medicines but found none that work. Neither did putting extra water into ponds help.

Dr Yahya Mahmud, the director of administration at the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, says that overproduction and abnormal fry with limited disease immunity may cause excessive mortality.

But he also identifies a strain of bacteria, rather than a virus, as a likely culprit. "The bacteria we found in Vietnamese koi," he says, "were also found in tilapia fish. They seem to have

fallen victim to the same disease over the past few years." The disease presents itself as reddish fins, indicative of haemorrhage.

Another possible cause identified by Dr HM Kohinor, a senior scientific officer at the Institute, is the push by some farmers to secure quick profits. "Farmers breed the fish in February to sell in March," he explains, "which leaves the water very impure with increased ammonia, which kills fish."

Scientists have experimented with 25 types of antibiotics recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations to find that most

have become redundant. Even doxycycline couldn't prevent the bacteria's spread.

I take Dr Kazi Azimuddin and Sirajum Munir of the Institute to one of the worst affected villages, Alalpur, to examine newly dead fish. We soon find a koi bleeding from the belly, which points to the fish's organs being infected. Dissection reveals a blackish, swollen liver.

Yet water tests also reveal problems: there is an excess of alkalinity, a staggering 2.4 mg per litre of ammonia with normal levels being 0.02 mg per litre, and lower than expected oxygen.

Unlike with paddy seeds, as yet the fish farming

industry does not benefit from a certification system for fry. Farmers routinely exceed recommended stocking density rates in the hope of greater profit, and hatchery and poultry feed manufacturers face little effective regulation. The next step in capitalising upon the country's considerable fish farming success should involve better practises in these areas. Such efforts might prove effective in solving the problem of Vietnamese koi deaths.

Such improvements are critical to the industry, with many pisciculturalists already choosing to leave the promising breed behind.



Shykh Seraj is a Media and Agriculture Development Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and recipient of Ekushey Padak, FAO A.H. Boerma Award and many other prestigious accolades. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director and Host of the popular agro-documentary, "Hridoye Mati O Manush".

# Gunfight over control of market leaves 20 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 20 people were injured, nine of them bullet-hit, in a gun battle between two factions of Awami League over taking control of Shanikdia Haat in Sadar upazila of the district on Monday.

Police said there was a longstanding conflict between Aslam Hossain, general secretary of Hemayetpur union unit of AL, and Panna Sarkar, another local leader of the party, over the issue.

A gun battle took place around 10:00 pm on Monday when supporters of Aslam swooped on Panna's men at a local tea stall in the area. At least 20 people from both sides were injured during the incident.

Of them, Abdus Samad, 28, Billal Hossain, 40, Mizan Malitha, 30, Bablu Pramanik, 23, Ripon Khan, 14, Dablu Pramanik, 35,

Shahin Pramanik, 30, Abdul Matin, 45, Sabur, 35, Johura Khatun, 55, were admitted to Pabna General Hospital. Critically injured Billal was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

As tension mounted in the area, additional police have been deployed in the area to avert any further trouble, said Md Ahsanul Haque, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Meanwhile, the district AL leaders claimed that this is not party conflict.

Contacted, Rezaul Rahim Lal, vice president of the district unit of AL, said the clash took place over a personal issue.

In Benapole, at least two people were injured in a clash between two groups of cattle traders over keeping control of a local cattle market in Goga border area under Sharsha upazila of Jessore district the same day,

reports UNB.

Sub-Inspector Syed Bayejit said Md Rashid, chairman of Goga Union Parishad, had long been at loggerheads with Babul Sardar, a local cattle trader, over taking control in the market.

As a sequel to the conflict, supporters of Rashid, confined Billal, supporter of Babul, around 9:00 pm added the SI.

As the news of Billal's confinement spread supporters of Babu Sardar locked in a clash with Rashid's supporters as they went to rescue Billal from their custody, leaving two people injured, he added.

Five crude bombs were blasted during the clash.

Being informed, police rushed in and brought the situation under control, said OC of Sharsha Police Station Enamul Haque.

# 14 get life for murder in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Sirajganj court on Monday sentenced 14 people to life imprisonment for killing a man in Ullapara upazila of the district in 2012.

The convicts are Fazlul Haque, 48, Morzina Begum, 43, Abdul Mamin, 21, Abdul Kuddus, 53, Abu Bakar Siddik, 28, Aminur Rahman, 33, Ashrafal Islam, 30, Bishwa Mondol, 33, Babar Ali, 50, Aynal Hossain, 28, Babul Hossain, 48, Hyder Ali, 43, Rezaul Hossain, 22 and Md

Samsul Islam, 43. They all hail from Puthia village in the upazila.

According to the prosecution, there was a conflict between Fazlul Haque and Nurul Islam of the village over the ownership of a disputed land. On June 27, 2012, Fazlul Haque and his men, equipped with sharp weapons, swooped on Nurul Islam, leaving him dead on the spot.

Victim's son Tofayel Ahmed filed a murder case

with Ullapara Police Station the following day, accusing 31 people. After investigation, police pressed charges against 27 people.

After examining the witnesses and case record, Additional District and Sessions Judge Dr Emon Ali Sheikh pronounced the verdict.

The judge acquitted 13 others as charges brought against them could not be proved, said Additional Public Prosecutor advocate Sirajul Haque.



PHOTO: STAR

Several houses went into the bed of the Meghna River at Harisava in Puranbazar of Chandpur town as water rushing down from the upstream caused sudden erosion there early yesterday.

# Dyke collapse inundates 30 Gaibandha villages

Five kids drown in floodwater in Jamalpur, Bogra situation static

STAR COUNTRY DESK

At least 32 villages in Sadar and Fulchhari upazilas of Gaibandha district were flooded following breach of Gaibandha town protection embankment (Sonail dyke) at Goderhat point yesterday.

Meanwhile, five children drowned in the floodwater in Jamalpur the same day.

The flood situation in other parts of Gaibandha remained static as Brahmaputra and Ghagot rivers were flowing 46 and 34 centimetres above the danger mark in the last 24 hours, said local Water

Development Board (WDB) sources.

At least hundred metres of the dyke was washed away by the surging water, inundating a vast tract of croplands and a number of homesteads at the villages in Kholahati, Boali, Badiskhali and Ramchardapur unions of Sadar upazila; and Udakahali, Kanchipara, Gajaria and Uriya unions in Fulchhari upazila, reports our correspondent.

The flood victims, who took shelter on the dyke, are now staying under the open sky, said locals.

Fish fry of 200 ponds were washed away by onrush of water through the breach.

In Sadullapur upazila, one and a half kilometre area at Kazolghop on Sadullapur-Gaibandha road went under floodwater, disrupting communications.

"We earlier informed the authorities concerned about the vulnerable point of Sonail flood control dyke along the River Ghagot, but they did not take any initiative in this regard," said Ibrahim Khalil Ulfat, chairman of Kholahati Union Parishad.

precautionary measure to renovate the vulnerable point of dyke, said Gaibandha WDB Executive Engineer Abdul Awal.

In Bogra, water levels of Jamuna and Bangalee rivers were increasing, inundating around 150 villages in five upazilas of the district in the last seven days, reports our correspondent.

According to WDB, the Jamuna and the Bangalee were flowing 66 and 48 cm above the dangers marks, leaving over 1.50 lakh peo-

ple marooned in the upazilas.

The affected upazilas are Sariakandi, Sonatola, Dhunat, Adamdighi and Shibganj.

The flood-hit people are facing acute crisis of food, medicine, drinking water and shelter.

The district administration has distributed 150 tonnes of rice, and Tk 9.15 lakh among the marooned people.

According to our Jamalpur correspondent,

the situation in the district was improving as floodwater in many areas started receding.

However, the Jamuna was flowing 52 cm above the danger mark at Bahadurabad ghat point yesterday, said local WDB sources.

At least five kids drowned in the floodwater in the last 24 hours, said the sources.

At least 2.50 lakh people in seven upazilas of the district have been marooned.



PHOTO: STAR

A portion of the flood protection embankment on the Ghaghot River at Godarhat near Gaibandha town got breached under the pressure of swelling water yesterday.

# 2 youths held for raping girl, uploading video on internet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Two youths were held in Habiganj Sadar upazila yesterday on charge of raping a 13-year-old girl and uploading the video on the internet.

The arrestees are Rajon Deb, 21, son of Narayan Deb of Baplabazar and Nurul Alam, 22, son of late Makhon Mia of Umednagar area in the district town.

Quoting victim's family members, police said the two arrestees along with one Siraj Mia, 23, son of Selim Mia of Kamranpur village, picked up the girl when she went out of her room to respond to the call of nature on the night of August 26.

They confined the girl to a room, raped her and filmed the act on a mobile phone.

The gang left the victim in front of her house in the morning and later uploaded the video on the internet.

On September 7, victim's father filed a case with Sadar Police Station after he came to know about the uploaded

video clips, said Nazim Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Our Bogra correspondents adds; Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-2 in Bogra yesterday sentenced a youth to life imprisonment on charge of violating a young girl in Shibganj upazila in 2001.

Judge of the tribunal Begum Momtaz Parvin delivered the verdict in presence of the accused, Anisur Rahman Liton, 35, son of Mozammel Haque Pramanik of Badaldighi village in Shibganj upazila.

The court also fined him Tk 50,000, in default he is to suffer one year more in jail.

According to the case statement, Liton picked up the girl, a resident of the same village, while she was going to her aunt's house on October 19 in 2001 and raped her.

The victim filed a case with Shibganj Police Station, accusing Liton. After investigation, police pressed charges against

Liton.

According to our Thakurgaon correspondent, a teenage girl was raped in Abdur Rashid College area in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on Sunday night, report.

Police and locals said the girl was returning home at Farabari village in the upazila from her relative's house around 8:00 pm. When the girl reached near the college, Jomser Ali, 25, son of Bathu Mohammad raped her.

Hearing screams, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the girl. The rapist managed to flee.

Away in Gaibandha, a mobile court sentenced a youth to one year's imprisonment on charge of beating up a college girl in Gaibandha Sadar upazila on Monday, reports our correspondent.

Police said Abu Taher, 23, of Sundarganj upazila, had long been teasing the victim, an honours student of Gaibandha Government College, on way to and from her college.

রেডি ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়  
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