

### Acid thrown on sleeping woman

Husband arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A woman sustained burn injuries as her husband threw acid on her face over a family feud in Sharsha upazila of Jessore yesterday. The injured is Sabina Khatun, 28, wife of Dipu Hossain Ripon, 42, of Dhannokhola village. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sharsha Police Station Maniruzzaman said Sabina has been staying at her father's residence at Amdala Gatipara village since the separation. Ripon threw acid on her face while she was sleeping at her father's house, leaving her seriously injured. She was admitted to Jessore Sadar Hospital. Ripon was arrested from Gatipara village, the OC said.



GRABBERS FEAST ON RIVER: The Louhajang river at Mirer Betka in Tangail gets squeezed into a narrow stream, thanks to the mindless encroachment by callous people.

### ATTEMPT TO RAPE MINOR 50-yr-old caught red-handed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A 50-year-old man was caught red-handed while attempting to violate a minor girl at Paikpara village in Sadar upazila of the district on Tuesday. Villagers caught the perpetrator, Abul Kashem, son of late Asgar Ali of the village, and handed him over to the police the same afternoon. Quoting locals, police said the seven-year-old victim was playing beside their house around 3:00pm. At one stage, her neighbour Kashem took the girl to a nearby paddy field and tried to violate her, said Sub-inspector Rashedul Islam of Sadar Police Station. Hearing her cries for help, villagers rushed to the spot and rescued the girl. They caught Kashem while he was trying to flee the scene and handed him over to the police, the SI added. The victim underwent a medical test at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital the same night. Yesterday morning, victim's father filed a case with Sadar Police Station accusing Abdul Kashem. Judge Saiful Islam of Thakurgaon Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court sent the accused to jail after police produced him before the court the same afternoon.

### Youths take oath to uproot drugs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Over 100 youths took an oath to uproot drugs from the society at an anti-drug meeting held at BDR Hat in Lalmonirhat town on Tuesday night. Around 1,000 residents of Ward No 4 in Lalmonirhat municipality took part in the meeting that was arranged by the ward unit of Community Policing. "Drugs pollute our environment. It is not possible to fight against drugs alone, so we have started working together with the help of police for uprooting drugs from the society," said Raju Islam. Officer-in-Charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station Rafiqul Islam said the people, especially the youth, must work together to abolish drugs from the society.

## Remove illegal structures by Nov 15 from Louhajang

Tangail administration asks encroachers, plans to launch drive to evict if they fail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The local administration asked the encroachers yesterday to remove their illegal structures on the river Louhajang by November 15, otherwise drive would be launched to evict them on November 29. The authorities concerned served a notice to the encroachers in this regard yesterday following an emergency meeting at the deputy commissioner's office on Tuesday. Several high government officials, teachers, journalists, freedom fighters and representatives of different environmental organisations and civil society were present at the meeting. According to the notice, people

living beside the river and those who grabbed its shorelines were asked to remove their illegal structures by November 15 and the eviction drive would start from November 29 if the encroachers fail to remove their illegal structures. The meeting urged the people from all walks of life to help the local administration in this regard. On August 10, local lawmaker Mohammad Sanwar Hossain inaugurated the work to free the river from illegal occupation. On that day, water hyacinth plants were cleared from Beradoma Bridge to Dighulia area in the town and the sluice gate in Jugni area was opened to allow the normal water flow of the river. In the last two months, the dis-

trict administration took different initiatives, like distribution of leaflets, human chain programme and mass signature campaign to create awareness among the townspeople. Originating from Dhaleswari in Baisnabari area in Tangail Sadar upazila the 35-kilometre-long river flows through the district town and falls into the Bangshai river in Jamurki area in Mirzapur upazila of the district. Local environmentalists said, the river, a lifeline for town dwellers, is almost dead due to mindless grabbing. If the normal flow of the river is not restored soon the district town will be unfit for living, they said.

## OSTRACISED BY PANCHAYET DECISION! 5 Sunamganj families in panic for days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Five families including a retired teacher are passing days amid utter sufferings and insecurity due to ostracism by a panchayet (village committee) at Ziapur village of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj. Victim families filed a petition with Chhatak Police Station on October 25, stating that panchayet president Nur Islam and its members Shafiq Mia, Anor Uddin, Rafiq Uddin and Ramjan Mia imposed the order, forbidding villagers to engage in any interaction with the five families. But no action has been taken to rescue the victims so far. There was a long standing feud between retired teacher Masuk Mia and Panchayet member Shafiq Mia over a land dispute, locals and victims said. Recently Masuk Mia's son Mahub Mia posted a Facebook status about the land and Shafiq Mia. On October 22, Nur Islam and Shafiq called an emergency panchayet meeting

and declared the order against the five families including Masuk Mia and his relatives at the village. "We are in serious trouble and insecurity. I wish I could die to end the suffering," said octogenarian Takhlis Mia, one of the victims, breaking down in tears. Khosru Mia, another victim, said he is suffering with his family as he cannot open his shop at Pargona Bazar for the last several days due to the panchayet order. Victims Shah Alam and Ashak Mia said they are passing days in panic due following the panchayet decision. Panchayet chief Nur Islam said Masuk Mia and his relatives ignored the panchayet decision and so, the five families were ostracised as per panchayet rule. Shafiq attempted to justify what he had done, saying, "Masuk Mia's son brought false accusations against me." Ashek Suja Mamun, officer-in-charge of Chhatak Police Station, said, "We received a written complaint in this regard. After investigation we will take legal action."

## Cuchia, boon for Jhenidah families

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Many families in six upazilas of the district are living solvent lives through catching cuchia (swamp eel), a vulnerable species of fish in Bangladesh. Cuchia traders said around 5,000 people of Bejpara, Baisha, Khalkula, Badurgacha, Sundarpur, Hardebpur, Harigobindapur under Kaliganj upazila are involved in catching the fish. Some families of Shailakupa, Harinakundo and Moheshpur upazilas also catch cuchia and sell it to the local traders. Gaya Das of Bejpara village said he has been hunting cuchia for 15 years, like other poor people. He said they are now free from debt by catching and selling cuchia. Dipok Kumar Das and Kishore Kumar Das said they catch cuchia in waterlogged areas of Kezuli water body in Kaliganj upazila, Dopila water body in Kotchandpur upazila, Garaganj Kumar river area in Shailakupa upazila, bus terminal area in Jessore and water bodies and haors in Barisal. The fish is sold at Tk 250 to Tk 300 a kg. Debendra Nath Das of Mahadebpur village in Kaliganj upazila said he catches three to four kgs of fish every day and earns Tk 600 to Tk 700. Cuchia trader Gopal Chandra Das Goni told this correspondent that he gets profit of Tk 2 lakh every year by investing Tk 7 lakh to Tk 8 lakh. He sends eight to 10 tonnes of the fish to Dhaka every month. Majid Mollah, a trader at Uttara in Dhaka, said he exports cuchia to China where the demand is high. Kaliganj Upazila Fisheries Officer Abdullah Mohammad Saidur Rahman Reza said cuchia is a kind of fish of the eel species and its scientific name is monoapterus cuchia.

## ATTACK ON UZ CHAIRMAN MP, his two sons among 14 sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Awami League lawmaker of Sirajganj-3 constituency and his two sons among 14 people have been sued on charge of attacking Tarash upazila parishad (UP) chairman Md Abdul Haque. The accused include lawmaker Amzad Hossain Milon, his two sons Jerjias Milon and Jakir Hossain Jewel and upazila parishad vice chairman Farhad Ali. Sadar union parishad chairman Babul Sheikh filed the case with Tarash Police Station on Tuesday night, Md Aminul Islam, officer in charge of the PS, said, adding that the accused went into hiding soon after the attack. On Sunday, ruling party men backed by the lawmaker on Sunday assaulted the upazila parishad chairman, also a local AL leader, in his office over establishing supremacy in the area.

## Magic in fish farming on floodplains

SHYKH SERAJ

Since the 80s of last century, fish farmers and entrepreneurs started commercial fish farming. Before that time, they merely had any idea about farming fish and getting financial benefit out of it. Many later took to fish farming and turned it into a profitable enterprise. People from different classes and professions joined in and they have made this sector one of the most enriched one by now. Many others are following, being inspired by success stories and programmes on the fish cultivation methods on the TV and newspapers. In the 90s, farmers started fish farming in seasonal flood plains. Comilla's Daudkandi has been a revolution for this model of fish farming. In course of time, thousands of farmers have got involved with this new approach. Many of you have already watched this on Hridoye Mati O Manush. After Comilla, for the past one decade in the floodplains of



Fishermen net huge catches of their cultivated fish at Bilshoron, a floodplain in Shibpur upazila of Narsingdi.

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".

fish hub, actually a majestic floodplain, blessed with different varieties of fishes. Some great entrepreneurs have taken lease of 120 bighas of low water land and farming indigenous and foreign fish varieties. The main entrepreneur behind this project is Jewel Karim Bhuiyan. Jewel has four brothers and all of them are highly educated and involved in fish farming. They are producing fish on around 300 bighas of land in Narsingdi, Netrakona and Sylhet. "Fish farming is in our blood and this has turned into our main family business for the past two decades," says Jewel. Under this project on the floodplains, Jewel and his brothers are producing around 800 tonnes of fish. They've already spent Tk 9 crore behind all their leased floodplains across the country. So far Jewel could make yearly 20% profit of their total investment. As the profit is on the rise, Jewel and his brothers have extended the area of fish farming. "Starting with only seven bighas of floodplains, we have extended fish farming area to hundreds of bighas of such lands," confidently adds Jewel. Their diligence and perseverance have given them good returns. They

believe if the government can bring in new strategies and technologies, it will definitely add a new dimension in their objective and there will be an even bigger boom. The five brothers have also started experimental layer farm on large cages set over their leased floodplains. This technology is although an old one, but chicken drops are going into the water as fish feed. And, the two thousand layer chickens are giving Jewel and his brothers around 1700 to 1800 eggs daily on an average. Jewel has really proved his skill about pond management. They are making sure that the floodplain water is clean and bacteria cannot infect the fish. These are the most significant issues that one entrepreneur should keep in mind before putting a duck, chicken or even a rabbit farm over floodplain or ponds. "We have further plans to make chicken farms over all our floodplains," says Muhib Hasan Bhuiyan, brother of Jewel. People who own these lands also believe that by giving lease they are now doing much better than before. In the past, these lands used to stay under water without any output. "The entire development scenario of this region has changed," said Monir Hossain, a local from

Shibpur. These floodplains are not only contributing to the development of livelihood but also ensuring fresh fish for the consumers around the region. Many people have got employments in the project. Right now as per the fisheries department account, fish is being cultivated on 430 hectares of floodplains in Narsingdi. But the locals believe it can spread and become more profitable, if the right plan and government focus is there to promote this kind of new venture or entrepreneurship. Dear readers, our fish used to come from natural resources in the past. Fish farming was a rare scene during that time. Now the days have changed and approaches towards doing something new with positive effect have changed along with it. Bangladesh now stands fourth in producing sweet water fish. And, I must say floodplain fish farming has been a revolution for sure in the positive movement of producing more fish. Millions of people have joined in this process with their heartfelt efforts and labour. They strived for more and now the good results are coming. I strongly believe an absolutely planned fish farming strategy will give Bangladesh even greater success and achievement in near future.



A basket full of cuchia at the house of a trader in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah. The photo was taken a few days ago.

Narsingdi's Shibpur, fish farming has spread, specifically in Bilshoron. Lands here usually stay under water for five to six months. Only natural fish used to arrive here in the past. Now, the same area sees revolution in fish farming, giving a great mileage for the fish farmers and entrepreneurs. Thousands of tonnes of fishes are produced as over a hundred fish farming projects, small and big, are working in the floodplain in Narsingdi. As per the district fisheries office the projection of production has become almost double in couple of years. Bilshoron is such a remarkable