

Iti Chakma murder sparks protest

O Ur Correspondent, Khagrachhari

Murder of an indigenous college girl in Khagrachhari town sparked protest. Police yesterday arrested a man for his alleged involvement in the killing of Iti Chakma, 18, a second year HSC student of Khagrachhari Government College, who was found dead on Monday. The arrestee is Monotos Chakma, 45, said OC Tarek Muhammad Abdul Hannan of Khagrachhari Police Station. Different college and school committees of Pahari Chhatra Parishad staged demonstration in the town yesterday, demanding speedy trial of the killers. The slit-throat body of Iti was found in the town on Monday night, said Sub-Inspector Md Sujadullah. She used to live with her elder sister Jonaki Chakma and brother-in-law at a rented house in Arambag area for the last five years, said family members. When the incident occurred, Iti was alone at the house, said the SI. Regarding the arrest, Jonaki said, "The arrestee is our distant relative and he visited our house a day before the killing." A murder case was filed. Meanwhile, different organisations including Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra Union and Hill Women Federation Rangamati Government College unit protested the killing, reports our Rangamati correspondent.



Mosquito nets are set to catch shrimp fry in the Meghna river in Noakhali. Right, different species of small fish, caught in the nets along with shrimp fry, are left on the bank.



Man jailed for dowry

O Ur Correspondent, Benapole

A Jessore court yesterday sentenced a man to three years' imprisonment in a dowry case filed in 2015. Judge Md Shajahan Ali of Jessore Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court handed down the verdict. The convict is Abu Yusuf, 31, son of M Azharul Haque of Jogipasha village in Khulna. The court also fined him Tk 5,000, in default, to serve one month more in jail. Yusuf used to demand dowry from his in-laws and tortured his wife Marzina Begum over the issue. As Marzina's family refused to give dowry, Yusuf sent her to her father's house.

Fry netting threatens fish stock

Poor fishermen in Noakhali use mosquito nets to catch shrimp fry during lean period

Nurul Amin, Noakhali

Rampant catching of shrimp fry with banned mosquito nets in the rivers, especially in the coastal areas of Hatiya, Subarnachar and Companyganj upazilas under the district poses threat to local fish species. Fry and eggs of different local fish like hilsa, koral, boal, baila and pangash and various environment-friendly insects that ate caught in the closely knitted nets are left on the river bank and get destroyed, locals said, expressing fear that this may lead to scarcity of fish in the rivers in near future. Collection of shrimp and prawn fry continues from February to June when other fish including hilsa are not available in the rivers. Those engaged in the act set mosquito nets at close distances and lift those every

three or four hours. Many species of fish have already become extinct. Catching a shrimp fry costs about 212 other fish fry and 1001 fish food particles, said sources of the District Department of Fisheries. To stop destruction of fish resources the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock issued a circular on September 21 in 2000, putting a ban on catching fry of shrimp and other fish from the natural sources. Violating the ban, a section of dishonest people in coastal areas engage poor fishermen and children from hard-pressed families to collect shrimp and prawn fry, especially from February to June. The collectors sell 100 pieces of fry at Tk 90 to Tk 100 in the local wholesalers who sell it to traders in Khulna, Jessore, Satkhira and other areas. "During this period we get very

small quantities of fish in the rivers. After paying dues to the owners of nets and other fishing equipment we are left with almost no money. We gave to catch shrimp and prawn fry for survival with the family," said fisherman Hiralal in Hatiya upazila. "I join others to collect and prawn fry for Tk 250 to Tk 350 a day as my father, a brick kiln worker, finds it very hard to meet the needs of our seven-member family," said Dulal, a teenager in Subarnachar upazila. If the government provides cash assistance to the fishermen during the lean season they could be prevented from collecting shrimp and prawn fry, locals say. District Fisheries Officer Bilquis Tahmina said, "I have held several view exchange meetings with the local fishermen who collect fry illegally in the coastal area. I will take emergency steps in this regard soon."

Engineer lands in jail for corruption

O Ur Correspondent, Pabna

The executive engineer of Bera municipality in Pabna was sent to jail on Tuesday after his surrender before a Pabna court in two cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for embezzling Tk 84.85 lakh from the state fund. The Special Judge Court in Pabna rejected the bail prayer of Khondakar Firoz Alam, executive engineer of Bera municipality, after he surrendered before the court, and ordered sending him to jail. Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, deputy director of ACC in Pabna, said the commission filed two cases against the executive engineer and 14 others on August 27 and August 31, 2016 for embezzling Tk 84.85 lakh from the government revenue fund.

Rohingyas to be sent back home

Says home boss in Naikkhongchhari

O Ur Correspondent, Cox's Bazar

The Rohingya refugees will be sent back to their homeland Myanmar after the problem is solved, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said at a press briefing at Pashchimkul under Tumbru union in Bandarban's Naikkhongchhari upazila yesterday. The home minister visited the spot as the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Tuesday night and early yesterday recovered four Chinese rifles, one SMG and one M-2 rifle from the hilly area. The elite force in a raid on Tuesday at Rohingya-inhabited Kutupalong under Ukhia upazila arrested Nur Alam, the main accused in the case for looting Ansar barracks inside Nayapara Rohingya refugee camp and killing of Ansar commander there last year. The raid at Pashchimkul was conducted following the lead gleaned from Nur Alam. "Rohingyas are destroying environment, forest resources and hills, besides deteriorating law and order. The situation is leaving a negative impact on the flourishing tourism sector in Cox's Bazar and its adjacent areas," Kamal said at the briefing. Director General of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Force Major General Mizanur Rahman Khan, Rab DG Benazir Ahmed and Cox's Bazar BGB Sector



Hye Mia feeding ducks at his hatchery at Uttar Ghagoa village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila. PHOTO: STAR

Perseverance key to duck hatchery success

K M Rezaul Hoque with Andrew Eagle

Hye Mia, 34, of Uttar Ghagoa village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila knows what it's like to be poor and unemployed. Fortunately, it seems the directionless years of struggle which characterised his young adulthood, are finally behind him. Through the establishment of a duck hatchery and farm, accompanied by solid perseverance, Hye has achieved solvency, with the promise of a more prosperous future. "Even just five years ago our family was gripped by poverty," he recalls. "My father had no land and worked as a labourer. I couldn't continue my education for lack of money and though I tried to complete the Secondary School Certificate examination in 2010, I was unsuccessful." "With nothing better to do I went to Dhaka to work as a rickshaw driver for two years," he says. "I earned a little money and subsequently returned home in the hope of starting some small trade. I had no experience with poultry but after taking advice from a friend I invested my savings in buying fifty ducklings, to raise them in our yard." Unfortunately, Hye's initial foray

into duck-rearing was destined to fail. "I worked hard but fortune betrayed me and I lost Tk 10,000 in that first year. I can't tell you how frustrating it was," he says. "I lost all myself-confidence." Sometimes in the midst of the deepest darkness, in days of greatest hopelessness, one's most ardent supporters have the chance to prove themselves. It was Hye's wife, Asha Moni, who encouraged her husband to try again. She borrowed Tk 10,000 from a local women's association to help him establish a duck hatchery for a second time. One kilometre from Dariyapur Bazar, Hye then established the Akash Duck Hatchery. With a painful lesson in failure behind him but with some experience gained, he strove once more to find the path to success. This new journey was not without challenge. "We couldn't procure a modern incubator for hatching the eggs," says Asha, "but I was able to introduce a natural system using husk to foster hatching and health in the newborn ducklings." Nonetheless, the mortality problem, to a lesser extent, persists. "It is still difficult to maintain an environment that favours newborn duckling

survival," says Hye. "Many die within the first twenty-four hours." Yet with a greater focus on the health of the birds, the hatchery has been able to sustain the loss. Where first efforts failed, second time around the hatchery made an initial profit of Tk 15,000. "I try my best to care for the ducks," says Asha, "I supply food and medicines." Thankfully, over time their business has grown. Both ducklings and eggs sell well in the market and the couple's hatchery has a population of over 500 birds. Locally, Hye has established a reputation as a duck farmer. "Akash Duck Hatchery is nowadays well-known," Hye says proudly. "Many people visit every day to collect ducklings and eggs direct. I will continue to expand, and hope to set up more hatcheries in the future." Moreover, Hye's venture has inspired others. "I wasted too much time running after jobs," says neighbour Sumon Mia. "I was never able to earn a decent income. I too am now trying my hand at duck husbandry." For Hye's family the hatchery's success has made a world of difference. "My two children study in school. We

Challenged girl raped by elderly man

O Ur Correspondent, Lalmonirhat

A 12-year-old speech and hearing impaired girl was raped allegedly by her elderly neighbour at Kashiabari village in Aditmari upazila of the district on Tuesday. Parents of the victim said locals could not take the girl to hospital for treatment as the alleged rapist's men obstructed them. Local people said Suruzzman Mia, 62, alias Chunnun Mia took the girl to a tobacco field beside their homestead and raped her. Sensing something wrong in the middle of the field, neighbours went there and rescued the girl from the spot. Chunnun Mia, however, fled the scene sensing the presence of the villagers. A local community leader said they have decided to settle the matter through arbitration within the shortest possible time.

Jujube offers good prospects to farmers

Cultivation of the fruit locally known as 'kul' on rise in Jessore's Sharsha upazila

MOhsin Milon with Andrew Eagle

Cultivation of jujube, locally known as 'kul' or 'boroi' is on the rise in Jessore's Sharsha upazila, adjacent to the Indian border. With a history of dependable profits that have compared favourably with other crops in recent years, jujube orchards look set to continue to expand. "I cultivate three varieties, called bau, apple and narkel jujube," says orchardist Jhantu Mia from Sharsha. "I've been growing jujube for ten years. With the market price now at about Tk 50 per kilogram for the fruit, I hope to make up to Tk 4 lakh profit from my orchard covering eight bighas of land this season. Per bigha it costs around Tk 30,000 to grow jujube." With first harvest occurring as soon as four months after an orchard is established, many small-scale farmers see in the fruit the potential for quick profits and self-sufficiency. In addition the development of jujube varieties, includ-

ing apple and bau, by the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute has generated interest. According to the upazila agriculture office, around 500 farmers in the area are orchardists of the apple and narkel varieties. "Around 120 hectares has been dedicated to different types of jujube," says Upazila Agriculture Officer Hirok Kumar Sarkar. "The high market prices are attractive." "So far this year I have sold jujube worth over Tk 35,000," says another orchardist, Ahsan Habib from Gatipara village. "Production cost was only Tk 15,000. The rest is profit." Yet despite plentiful harvests, a considerable amount of jujube is damaged by falling from the tree early. Farmers say they do not have good advice how to prevent this problem. They hope the government can offer added technical support to the jujube industry. In the meantime, after meeting local demand, truckloads of jujube are winding their way across the country, from Sharsha to Satkhira, Barisal and especially to the wholesale markets of Dhaka, for consumers to relish.



A grower takes care of jujube, locally known as 'kul', at his orchard in Jessore's Sharsha upazila. PHOTO: STAR