

Duck rearing turns boon for marginal families

Shykh Seraj
Khutigachha village in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila is very well known for duck rearing. It's amazing to see them in groups swimming through the beels (wetland) of Tarash. The landscape is ideal as the banks of these beels full of transparent water. What we see in dry season, is exactly the opposite here in monsoon. Everything goes under the beel's water. It is a beautiful natural backdrop. Meanwhile, ducks in the region are bringing good luck and money flow for the rural farmers here. Along with cultivating rice and fish, farmers are getting extra financial benefit from rearing ducks in open waterbodies. Not only in Khutigachha, but around the Chalan Beel area the economic outcome has changed positively because of the ducks.



Shykh Seraj feeds ducks at a beel (large water body) in Tarash upazila of Sirajganj. PHOTO: STAR

Jahanara always had intentions of increasing their income by working alongside her husband. She didn't have any educational background. She saw another farmer Abdul Alim's duck farm and was inspired by Alim's success. She started a very miniature duck farm. And, now, she has more than thousands. "My success was gradual and steady, and my patience and perseverance paid off," says Jahanara. She's doing really well and during my visit to Khutigachha, I heard people mentioning about her courage. Jahanara's ducks are pretty healthy and people buy at least 400-500 ducks at a time. "You know, I bought 10 kathas (16 decimals) of land," says happy Jahanara. "What about your children, are they studying?" I asked. "My elder son goes to school and my month end balance is Tk 15,000 (USD 178)," replied Jahanara. "The entire family now depends on my income," added bold Jahanara. Jahanara's success had a great impact on the society as well. Shaju Akhter, another woman,

shared her story with me. "Ducks are like blessings to me, I'm also planning to rear swans as they are not attacked with too many diseases and they are more profitable," says Shaju. The area is not much different than haor areas. Inside the village, I saw flocks of ducks in the street. There are many big and small farms in Khutigachha village. Locals claim that there are 800 duck farms in Tarash upazila alone. By raising ducks, many poor families like Jahanara's and Shaju's turned well-off. Many make their living by raising ducks throughout the whole year now. Many are involved in hatching eggs of ducks. On the other hand, many go far away to raise ducks. Overall, duck plays a pivotal role in changing the socio-economic state of the locals. The pro-duck farmer Abdul Alim's farm is 30 year old. He is from the same village. He used to be a simple day-labourer before. With extreme effort, he raised his ducks later on and bought seven bighas (2.31 acres) of land from the earnings from ducks. "I sent abroad my son for higher studies with the earnings from ducks," said Alim.

"I have also trained 150 farmers on duck rearing," he added. In the several farms of this area, it was difficult to get good quality baby duck once. To get rid of that problem, there are many local hatcheries now. From those, baby ducks of great quality are being produced. Amir Hossain is producing them using local durable technology with hurricane lamp. During the 90's, I had shown the process of producing baby ducks on Bangladesh Television's Mati O Manush (Soil & People) programme. Many are still successfully doing it and Amir Hossain is one of them. Rabiul Islam is another educated young farmer who raises ducks for three months during monsoon. He says he gets profit of at least Tk 1 lakh (USD 1190) every year. The success stories of this village are interlinked with one another. Duck has changed the economic state of this village. Do you remember that I did an episode on raising ducks in Netrokona's Mohanganj's haor area? It was back in 2012. After the cultivation Boro rice, duck and fish come together to bring wider smiles on farmers' faces in

those regions of the country. When the idea of commercial duck raising came into the picture, haor areas came up as the best places to do it. From the 90's, the practice of raising ducks started more or less in all the six districts of the haor area. There are thousands of duck farms there today, especially in Netrokona, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Sunamganj, Habiganj and Moulvibazar. Many government and private organisations are also providing training and financial assistance to the duck farmers. There is risk behind any venture. In case of raising ducks, a huge risk is disease. When ducks die due to disease, farmers are left with nothing to do. It is possible to avoid any risk if you are careful enough. If the farmers are aware, they can contact local government livestock office to get all the necessary information to save their ducks from diseases. The government offices should come forward as well in this case to increase the prospect of duck farming. To develop the varieties of different meat and egg producing ducks, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute can take effective steps. If those who locally produce a day old baby duck are provided training and financial assistance, then this initiative can be successful. If this sector can be made durable by creating a market system of duck value chain, then the farmers will greatly benefit out of it. Dear readers, raising duck is an old practice in beel and haor areas. It is an alternative system to make livelihood for locals. Even poor landless farmers are raising ducks to take care of their family. In these areas, one helps to take another's success further ahead. If some facilities were made for raising ducks in beel and haor areas, then marginal farmers would have benefited greatly. A revolution in raising ducks would have taken the right path as well. At the same time, a new success would have been achieved in protein development in the country.

Two girls violated Youth arrested in Pabna

STAR COUNTRY DESK
Two schoolgirls were raped allegedly by their neighbours in Joypurhat and Pabna on Tuesday. An eight-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her neighbour at Bhanipur village in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila on Tuesday noon, reports our correspondent. Police arrested accused Sabuj Sarkar, 20, of the village from Ataikula area in Sadar upazila. The victim, a Class II student of local primary school, is now undergoing treatment at Pabna Medical College Hospital. Officer-in-Charge of Chatmohar Police Station Md Ahsan Habib said the victim went to watch television at a poultry farm adjacent to her house on Tuesday noon. At the time, no other person was present there. Taking the opportunity, Sabuj entered the farm and raped the girl. Hearing screams, family members and locals rushed to the spot and rescued the victim and sent her to the hospital. Due to excessive bleeding, she had a surgery, said Dr Monirul Islam. Meanwhile, a seventh grader was violated allegedly by her neighbour in Joypurhat in the afternoon, reports our Dinajpur correspondent. Police and family members said the victim's mother went out of home on Tuesday afternoon for depositing money of her micro credit loan of local NGO. Getting the 15-year-old girl alone at home, Md Babu Hossain, 35, of Chowanipara village in Sadar upazila raped her. Hearing her cry for help, villagers rushed there and rescued the girl. She is now undergoing treatment at Joypurhat Modern Hospital. However, the rapist managed to flee.

Three kids drown in ponds

STAR COUNTRY DESK
A child drowned in a pond in Gaibandha Sadar upazila yesterday, while two minors drowned in Kasba upazila of Brahmanbaria on Tuesday. Palash Mia, 7, son of Jaharul Islam of Purbopara village drowned in Gaibandha Sadar upazila, reports our Gaibandha correspondent. Quoting locals, Badsha Mia, member of Ghagoa Union Parishad, said the child was playing on the bank of a pond adjacent to his house when he suddenly slipped and fell into the pond. On hearing the hue and cry, local people recovered the unconscious boy from the pond. They rushed him to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital where the on-duty physician declared the boy dead. Two minor children drowned in a pond in Kasba upazila of Brahmanbaria early Tuesday, our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports. The incident took place at Gulara village under Kharera union in the upazila at around 9:30am on Tuesday. The victims were identified as Nazmin Akter, 5, daughter of Billal Hossain of Gulara village and Lamim Chowdhury, 7, son of Sohag Chowdhury of Chinair village of Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila. They were maternal cousins. Kasba Police Station Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Mrinal Debnath said Lamim came to his maternal grandfather's house at Gulara village. He was playing on the bank of a pond along with his cousin Nazmin. All of a sudden, they fell into the pond when their relatives were not around. Later, locals recovered their floating bodies from the pond. They died while being taken to Kasba Upazila Health Complex.

Man electrocuted in Rajbari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur
A man died of electrocution at his shop at Baruly Bazar in Baliakandi upazila under Rajbari district yesterday morning. The deceased was Kudus Mondol, 45, son of Hemayet Mondol of Borohijli village under Baliakandi upazila. Sakhawat Mondol, cousin of Kudus Mondol, said Kudus came in contact with a live electric wire while he was working in his shop around 10:00am. He was taken to Baliakandi Upazila Health Complex, where an on-duty doctor declared him dead, Sakhawat added.

Khagrachhari-CTG road in awful state

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari
Khagrachhari-Chattagram, the most important road that connects Khagrachhari Sadar with other districts of the country, lies in awful state for over three weeks, making it tough for vehicles to use the route. Due to heavy rain and landslide for three days from June 11, 10 kilometres area of the road in Alutilla hill area got heavily damaged, said Mohammad Moslemuddin Chowdhury, executive engineer of Khagrachhari Road and Highways Department (RHD). The department has identified 20 spots of the road, which must be repaired on an emergency basis. If these parts are not renovated immediately, the road will collapse during further heavy rainfall. Md Ibrahim, a truck driver, said several parts of the road were destroyed by rainwater. There is a possibility of major collapse in Supmara and dumping station areas. The RHD engineer said the fiscal year has ended. Repair work will start with the beginning of the new fiscal year.



Khagrachhari-Chittagong road at Sapmara on the foot of Alutilla hill remains in a precarious condition as the protection wall collapsed due to erosion by the Dhalia canal a few days ago. PHOTO: STAR

Youth dies from snakebite

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur
A youth died from snakebite at Masordia village in Madhukhali upazila under the district around 11:45pm on Monday. The victim was Mofizur Mollah, 26, son of Mokter Mollah of the village. A snake bit Mofizur while he was coming to his house after watching a World Cup football match at a nearby house at the same village, locals said. He was rushed to Madhukhali Upazila Health Complex the same night. There an on-duty doctor declared him dead, they said.

3-lakh-metre current nets burnt



The coast guard burns current nets worth Tk 3 lakh after seizing it during drives in two rivers in Patuakhali yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali
A team of Bangladesh Coast Guard seized about 3-lakh metres of current nets from two rivers under Rangabali, Galachipa and Dashmina upazilas in a drive in the district yesterday. The team also seized 20,000 metres long ber jal (net) and 30 badha jal, both locally made to catch small fish, including shrimp fry. The team conducted the drive from early morning till noon on the Burango and Tentulia rivers. It was led by Chief Petty Officer Mizanur Rahman, who is also in charge of naval ship Bagura. Police and fisheries officials also joined the drive. The drive was conducted at Char Bashbaria, Char Bhutum, Jouta, Auliapur, Ronogopaldi, under Dashmina upazila, Badnatali, Ulania, Panpattee under Galachipa upazila and Char Lata, Koralia under Rangabali upazila. Later on, the seized nets were taken to Hajir Haat area under Dashmina upazila and burned, Mizanur said.

Body found with injury marks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah
Police recovered the body of a man from a field at Dulalpur village in Shailakupa upazila under the district on Tuesday morning. Identity of the deceased, aged around 32, could not be known as of filing this report. Locals found the body beside a canal of the village around 9:00am on Tuesday, said Ramchandrapur police camp-in-charge SI Iqbal Kabir. "Informed, police recovered the body that bore injury marks on the head, legs and other parts. Two bottles of poison and a bicycle were also seized from the spot. The body was sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy," he said.

College teacher found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur
A college teacher was found dead at his rented house in the district town yesterday. The deceased was Abdus Salam, assistant professor of the Department of Management at Government Suhrawardi College in the district. He stayed alone at the house for the last few days. Police recovered the body from the third floor of Hamida Manjil in Rajarhaat area of the town around 12:00 noon and sent it to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police officer Khandakar Shahidul Islam, also the neighbour of the victim, said the cellphone of Salam was ringing for a long time, but he did not receive it. So, he informed police about the matter. Later, the law enforcers entered the house breaking the door and recovered the hanging body from the kitchen. Md Shukur Ali, head of management department at the college, said as Salam did not come to college yesterday morning, he phoned him. But after ringing several times, he did not receive it. Later, they went to the house and came to know that he committed suicide. On February 6 in 2010, he joined the college as assistant professor and he was to go on retirement in December this year, said Shukur. Salam had wife, two daughters and a son. Before Eid-ul-Fitr, his family members went to his native home in Barguna. Primarily, it seems to be a suicide case, said Mollah Azad Hossain, additional superintendent of police in Pirojpur. "After getting post mortem report, we will be able to say the exact reason of his death," he said.