



FOR THE LOVE OF FISH



FOR the last 300 years, locals in Bogura's Gabtali upazila have been arranging a *Machher Mela*, fish fair, usually on the last Wednesday of the Bengali month of Magh or on the first Wednesday of Falgun. Fishermen and fish traders from across the country gather here, peddling a variety of fish, in hopes of earning a handsome profit. Besides, wooden furniture, bamboo products, various kinds of sweets -- some huge fish-sized ones -- and homemade products, fruits and lime for betel-nuts are available in this fair. The next day, the fish fair continues but this time it serves to honour the daughters and their husbands in the area. More than one lakh enthusiastic participants from nearby districts visit the festival, which is arranged on 30 bighas of farmland in Poradah Maath area. According to the local lore, the fair began taking place almost 300 years ago when monks living in the area came across a giant golden coloured Catla fish in a nearby river.

Photo: SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN JONY

