



Amid the ongoing ban on catching all kinds of fishes in the Padma and Meghna rivers, fishermen pass their time knitting and mending nets while their fishing boats remain anchored on the bank of the Meghna at Chairman Ghat in Hatiya upazila of Noakhali. The government has imposed the ban for two months from March 1 to April 30 to protect fry, especially those of popular fish hilsa.

PHOTO: NURUL AMIN

Humiliated, six Biranganas living in fear

Family members of war crime accused allegedly behind the scene

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Families of six Birangana (war heroine) freedom fighters in Sunamganj's Derai and Shalla upazilas are passing days in fear of torture and fresh humiliation in public allegedly by the family members of some local war crime accused.

The situation worsened, following a recent programme, which was organised to honour six Birangana freedom fighters and later postponed in the face of agitation allegedly by the family members of some detained war crime accused.

On March 29, local union unit of Jubo League, youth wing of the ruling Awami League, arranged a programme in the premises of Brajendraganj RC High School in Derai upazila to honour six war heroines from Derai and Shalla upazilas, locals said.

The programme was, however, suspended, following agitation by a group of protesters, allegedly led by family members of some local war crime accused.

The faction also brought out a procession, chanting 'humiliating slogans' against the war heroines.

The recent incident has made the Biranganas and their family members more panicked, as they

are the key witnesses in the cases filed against some local influential people for committing crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

On November 12 last year, three Biranganas -- Peara Begum, Muktaban Bibi and Jamila Begum of Ujangaon village in Shalla upazila -- were given recognition as freedom fighters at the 59th Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council meeting.

Alongside them, three other Birangana freedom fighters -- Kulsuma Begum, Kumila Das and Alekjan Bibi, who got their recognition earlier -- were also invited in the March 29 programme.

"After all these years, though the government has given recognition to my mother and the other Biranganas, family members of some war crime accused often try to humiliate them," Peara's son Shimul Hasan Mukti said.

"Recently police arrested several local war crime accused and their family members think we triggered the arrest," Mukti said.

Alongside many others, Shoyeb Miah, Golap Miah and Jalal Uddin, relatives of some recently detained war crime accused, chanted 'humiliating slogans' and forced the organiser to postpone the programme on March 29, he said.

Earlier, following a warrant, issued by the

International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), police arrested five war crime accused from Derai and Shalla upazilas on December 19.

They are Mohammad Jubair Monir, Jakir Hossain, Siddiqur Rahman, Tota Miah and Abdul Jalil.

The lives of the Birangana freedom fighters were in peril till they got their recognition, said Shams Shamim, author of '1971 Chorer Gaoer Osruto Akkhyan', adding that it got worsened after the recent arrests of some war crime accused.

Derai Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Shariful Islam said, "Being informed, I along with Shalla UNO and officers in charge of police stations concerned visited the area and talked to locals."

"Primarily, we found that the incident was triggered by a conflict between two factions of local Jubo League. One arranged the programme, while the other protested it," the UNO said, adding that they did not find any proof of chanting slogans against the Biranganas.

Meanwhile, Birangana freedom fighter Jamila Begum filed a General Diary (GD) with Shalla Police Station in this regard on Thursday. Officer in Charge of the police station Ashraful Islam said.

'Drug dealers' vandalise UP member's house

His family members, relatives living in fear as no action taken by police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A Union Parishad (UP) member and his family are living in fear as police neither recorded any case nor took any action after six houses belonging to him and his relatives were vandalised in Sultanpur Panchabati village of Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

A group of five to seven youths, led by local drug syndicate member Enayetullah alias Sohel Muni of the same village, also hurled a number of crude bombs into the houses after setting fire to a haystack and damaging several three-wheelers parked in the house premises, claimed Jamshed Bhuiyan, uncle of UP member Jahangir Alam Bhuiyan, in a written complaint filed with Brahmanbaria Sadar Police Station.

The written complaint was filed as police refused to record a case regarding the incident, UP member Jahangir told this correspondent.

According to the complaint, UP member Jahangir's family first came under attack by

members of the drug syndicate after Jahangir organised an anti-drug meeting in the area in August last year.

Soon after the meeting, on August 25, a group of youths in helmets threw crude bombs on houses belonging to Jahangir and his relatives. Jahangir filed a general diary in this regard the next day.

Wednesday's attack on the same family was a retaliatory response of the drug syndicate, claimed Jahangir's uncle in the complaint.

Speaking with this correspondent Jahangir said when the government is taking a tough stance against drug dealers, he is living in fear for being vocal against drug dealers.

Enayetullah, however, claimed that all the accusations are false and Jahangir himself staged the attacks to put the blame on him.

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge Selim Uddin of the police station said they would take due action once the accusations made in the written complaint are found to be true during investigation.

'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A suspected robber was killed in a 'gunfight' with police at Saydabad of Sirajganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Md Shariful Islam Sharif, 25, of Mymensingh Sadar upazila.

Sirajganj Sadar Police Station OC Mohammad Daud said seven to eight robbers were making preparation to loot handloom traders after felling logs on Belkuchi-Saydabad road in the area in the morning.

As police raided the area the gang opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate, which triggered a gunfight, said the OC.

"Later, police arrested Sharif with bullet injuries from the spot while his cohorts managed to flee. Sharif was admitted to Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib General Hospital in Sirajganj where he died," he said.

Sexual assault victim dies

Attackers fed her pesticide as she resisted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A woman, mother of a two-year-old daughter, died in a hospital yesterday in Dinajpur's Biral upazila where assailants forced her to ingest pesticide after a failed rape attempt on her on Friday.

An employee at non-government organisation World Vision, Akhi Moni, 20, was an HSC student and also was a teacher at a school operated by Brac, said family members.

Her father, Asaduzzaman from Raghunatpur village in Parbatipur upazila, said her daughter was staying at his house in Madhabbati village of Biral upazila and her husband, Mehdi Hasan Rabbi, left for Dhaka the day before the attack.

Around 12 midnight on April 5, Akhi was home alone as her grandmother had gone outside, he said adding that Tozammel Hossain Toza, 25, son of late Mohsin Ali of the same village, knocked on the door around that time and she opened the door assuming that her grandmother has come home.

Toza then forced into the house and attempted to rape her, he alleged.

Alerted by her screams, neighbours came to her rescue and confined Toza to a room in the house after catching him red-handed.

Toza's brother, UP Chairman Maruf Hossain soon raided the house with his henchmen. Before leaving the house with Toza, they beat up Akhi and forcibly poured pesticide in her mouth, said Asaduzzaman.

She was rushed to Biral Upazila Health Complex where she died yesterday.

Golam Rasul, officer-in-charge of Biral Police Station, said they sent the body to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy and no case was filed in this connection as of yesterday afternoon.

Contacted, Akhi's husband said he was making preparations to file a case.

Man killed in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An elderly man was killed and five others were injured in a clash between two groups over a disputed land at Teligram village in Santhia upazila on Saturday.

The deceased was Abdus Samad, 60, of the village.

As a sequel to a land dispute between Samad and Azir Uddin of the village, their men attacked each other with lethal weapons, leaving at least six people injured, said Ataikula Police Station OC Md Moniruzzaman. Of them, Samad died at Pabna Medical College Hospital.

His daughter Rozina Khatun filed a case against nine people and police arrested Azir Uddin, Johurul Islam and Mohsin Ali of the village in this connection, said the OC.

Two seventh-graders gang-raped in Madaripur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Two madrasa girls were gang-raped allegedly by four youths at Baligram village in Madaripur's Kalkini upazila on Thursday.

The victims are Class VII students of a local madrasa in the upazila. They hail from the village.

The girls' family members alleged that local Awami League activist Motin Mollah, also former chairman of Baligram union parishad, and Delwar Hossain, sub inspector (SI) of Dashed Police Station, tried to hide the incident, taking Tk 3 lakh as bribe from the families of the rapists through arbitration.

The accused are Shakib Hawlader, 24, Nayan Sarder, 23, Md Hridoy, 22, and Al Amin, 22, of Atipara village in the upazila.

Locals said the youths took the two girls to an abandoned house and raped them on Thursday night. Hearing screams, villagers rushed to the spot and rescued the victims.

However, the rapists managed to flee the scene.

The SI and Motin later tried to 'settle' the issue, taking Tk 3 lakh as bribe from the culprits' families through arbitration, they said.

Contacted, Motin said, "The victims' family members came to my house around 1:00am on Friday. But I did not take any money to resolve the problem."

The SI said he did not take money from anyone on the issue.

Md Golam Kibriya, officer in charge (OC) of the police station, said the victims' families filed a case, accusing the four, and police are raiding different areas to arrest the culprits.

The victims were sent to Madaripur General Hospital for medical test, he said.

Subrata Kumar Hawlader, superintendent of police, said, "None can settle such a case through arbitration. If any policeman is found involved in the incident, we will take action against him."



A large hole has been created in the ground of Balapukur Government Primary School in Saptibari union in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila due to removal of sand by a local influential man. Although the unscrupulous act poses risk for the teachers and students, in addition to depriving the kids of free movement and playing games, the authorities are yet to take any remedial measures.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



The ancient pond in Bagerhat's Morrelganj upazila where partial skeleton of a crocodile head, inset, was found during digging yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Crocodile skeleton found in ancient pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Partial skeleton of a crocodile's head was found 14 feet below ground level in Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat yesterday.

Workers found the skeleton while excavating an ancient pond named Dibraj Dighi in Panchakaron village of the upazila.

According to locals, the dighi (large pond) is one of the around 360 such ponds built in Bagerhat during the reign of Muslim ruler and preacher Khan Jahan Ali, who was known to have released crocodiles in the ponds.

The skeleton unearthed yesterday might be of a crocodile from that period, they also said.

Confirming the unearthing of the skeleton by workers, Panchakaron Union Parishad Chairman Abdur Razzak said it was handed over to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), who will send it to archaeology department.

UNO Kamruzzaman said the skeleton will soon be handed over to the Department of Archaeology.

TWO INFIGHTING DEATHS 3 AL leaders among 47 sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 47 people including three leaders of Awami League (AL) in Joypurhat were sent to jail by a court yesterday.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court of Iqbal Bahar passed the order after they appeared before the court with bail plea in a case filed over death of two persons in a March 16 factional clash between rival AL groups in Kalai upazila.

Police filed the case with Kalai Police Station, accusing 252 people. Of them, 102 were identified.

The three AL leaders had been on the run, said police.

They are Minfuzur Rahman Milon, organising secretary of district AL and also chairman of Kalai Upazila Parishad; Shawkat Habib, member of district AL and also chairman of Matrai Union Parishad; and Wazed Ali, president of AL's Udoypur union unit.

Police said two factions of AL, one led by Minfuzur Rahman Milon and the other by Shawkat Habib, locked in a clash on the night of March 16 in Moslemganj village of Kalai upazila over a dispute during election to the upazila parishad that was held on March 10.