



Huge quantity of shrimp in 8,000 registered enclosures died in Bagerhat's Farirhat upazila due to sudden drop in oxygen level. The photo was taken recently.

# Low oxygen level killing shrimps

Affected fish farmers count loss worth Tk 30 crore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A sudden drop in the oxygen level has led to the deaths of shrimps in 8,000 enclosures at Fakirhat upazila of Bagerhat.

Farmers received a huge blow on Sunday as they had no option but to sell their produces at dirt cheap rates at Foltita, the largest wholesale fish market in the district.

The losses amounted to about Tk 30 crore, according to local traders.

The farmers had sold their produces at rates five times less than the usual, said Syed Tohidul Islam Poplu, president of Foltita Fisheries Association. "They sold each kilogram at Tk 200 to Tk 300 whereas the standard rate is Tk 1000 to Tk 1200 per kg," he told this paper.

Senior Upazila Fisheries Officer Abhijit Shil said, "Shrimps are dead in 80 percent of the 8,000 registered enclosures. Heavy rain on Saturday night drastically lowered the temperature in enclosures that were fervent in daytime."

The water level also shrunk due to hot spell, he said.

All these factors were behind the deaths of shrimps, according to the officer. Similar situations have been reported from Mollahat and Bagerhat Sadar upazila.

During a visit to Kalkaliya and Boalbari areas in Fakirhat, this correspondent saw a grim picture where dejected farmers were hurriedly sorting out saleable shrimps and taking them to nearby markets.

"I set up my enclosure on five bigha area. Now I do not know how I will recoup the

loss," said Nazir Uddin, a farmer of Foltita. Subrata, another farmer of the area, echoed him.

"Thousands of shrimps died following the sudden rain on Saturday. We earn our living by cultivating shrimps. We have taken loans from NGOs and banks. How will we repay the loans?"

Another farmer Apurba Roy said, "On Sunday morning, I saw dead shrimps floating in my enclosure. As I stepped into the water, I found that most of the fishes had rotten. So, I sorted out some for sale and took them to Foltita."

"I have never seen such a disaster before. Around 80 percent of the shrimps in my enclosure are dead," Apurba said, citing his concerns over loans.

Hitler Goldar, chairman of Mulghar Union Parishad (UP), said, "Most of the farmers had started shrimp farming after taking loans from NGOs and banks. Now it is impossible for them to repay the debts," he said, urging the government to exempt the farmers from paying interests and give them fresh interest-free loans.

"Farmers are being advised to pour medicines in enclosures. Drugs used to increase oxygen levels in water bodies are available in local markets," said Bagerhat District Fisheries Officer Dr Khaled Kanak.

"Announcements through microphones are on. We are telling them to not panic. Fisheries officials are giving them relevant instructions," he said.

The overall damage was yet to be assessed, he added.

PHOTO: STAR

# Saidpur bird hospital cheers animal lovers

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

With the objective of providing treatment and healthcare to injured and sick birds, a hospital has been set up on the Saidpur upazila parishad premises.

The wildlife recovery and temporary caring centre, popularly known as bird hospital, drew attention of animal lovers. It is the brainchild of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) SM Golam Kibria.

In April this year, the UNO set up the tin-shed centre having four cages where at least 12 injured or sick birds can be kept for treatment at a time.

The UNO said "I joined here last

year. I was so amazed to see earthen pitchers attached to tree branches on the upazila parishad premises as potential nesting sites for birds and came to know that the noble initiative was taken by hundreds of young members of 'Setubandhan', a voluntary organisation working for birds' protection in the upazila for long."

The youths regularly rescue injured and sick birds but they face problem in treating those in absence of a permanent hospital for birds, he said, adding that due to this, it took a number of days for the youths to cure the birds.

With the objective of providing treatment to those injured and

sick birds, he set up the centre five months ago, said UNO Golam Kibria, adding that livestock department officials now visit it on a daily basis.

The members of Setubandhan only arrange food for the birds at the centre at their own cost, he said.

Alamgir Hossain, president of Setubandhan, said around 70 injured and sick birds, including five vultures, were treated at the centre in the last five months from April.

On Monday morning, an injured vulture was freed after giving it proper treatment at the centre for four days. The volunteers of Setubandhan released it in presence

of the upazila parishad chairman, the UNO and other officials of the parishad. The volunteers rescued the injured vulture from Gorgram village in Sadar upazila.

Upazila parishad chairman Moksedul Momin said in recognition of the success of the endeavour, Setubandhan received the government's Bird Protection Award in 2016.

Local people also brought injured birds to the centre for treatment, said Masum Billah, secretary of Setubandhan.

Dr Md Rezaul Hasan, upazila livestock officer, said they are very happy to provide treatment to the injured birds in the centre.



An injured vulture was released on Monday after giving it proper treatment at the wildlife recovery and temporary caring centre in Nilphamari's Saidpur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR



An artisan spray-paints a Durga idol at a puja mandap in Adalat Para area of Tangail town. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

# Durga Puja preparations in full swing

1,187 puja mandaps to be set up in Tangail this year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Organisers and artisans are busy decorating mandaps and idols as Durga Puja is only a week away.

The main festivities of the Durga Puja -- the largest religious festival of the Hindus in Bangladesh as well as India's West Bengal and several other eastern states of India -- will begin on October 3 and it will end with emersion of the idols on October 8.

There will be 1,187 puja mandaps (worship pavilion) in 12 upazilas of Tangail this year, said Prodig Kumar Goon Jhantu, general secretary of District Puja Udjapan Parishad.

The highest number of mandaps, total 236, will be set up in Mirzapur upazila, he added.

Preparations were going on in full swing at different mandaps when this correspondent recently visited

Adalat Para, College Para, Paradise Para, Thana Para and Bajitpur areas in Tangail town.

Artisans have been busy painting the earthen idols at different mandaps since early morning till midnight, said Bibhas Chowdhury, publicity secretary of Adalat Para Puja Sangsad.

Other preparations of the mandaps, including setting up of decorative lighting and gates, were also being made during this phase, he added.

Artisan Dipak Paul of Taratia area said the idols were made over the last one month and now they were working on paintwork on the idols.

They are engaged with idol making jobs for one and a half months during this time of the year, but they do not have any job for almost the

rest of the year, said Mohadeb Paul, another artisan the same area.

"The money we earn by making protima [idol] is not much, but we are still trying to hold on to our ancestral profession," he also said.

Meanwhile, the district administration and police are taking special security measures in and around the mandaps to make the event a success.

Mohammad Ahaduzzaman Miah, additional superintendent of police (crime) in Tangail, said for better coordination of the measures, the police and officials of the district administration have already held meetings with leaders of the local Hindu community recently.

Volunteers from Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad will also assist law enforcers during the festivities, he said.

# Madaripur villagers' clash leaves one killed, 15 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A man was killed and 15 others were injured in a clash between two rival groups over catching fish in a pond at Satobadda village in Madaripur Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shama Das, 40, son of late Jibon Das of Parbatbagan village.

Locals said there was a longstanding conflict between Tarok Das and Dilip Bala over the ownership of an old pond at Satobadda village.

When Shama Das, younger brother of Tarok Das, went to catch fish in the disputed pond yesterday morning, Dilip and his supporters hacked him.

Seriously injured Shama Das was rushed to Madaripur General Hospital and then referred to Faridpur Medical College Hospital as his condition worsened. He later died on way to the hospital.

After the incident, the two rival groups

again locked in a clash, leaving at least 15 people from both sides injured.

Of the injured, 12 were taken to Madaripur General Hospital while the rest to Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

Shampa Das, wife of Shama Das, said "They killed my husband. I want justice for the murder."

Sandha Bala, wife of Dilip, said "At first Shama hit me with a bamboo stick on the head. At the time, my husband and brother-in-law locked in a clash with Shama."

Sougatul Alam, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said on information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Additional police have been deployed in the area to avert any further trouble.

Police detained Dilip's wife and two brothers for interrogation, said the OC.

No case was filed in this regard as of filing of this report around 4:30pm yesterday.

# 2 missing boys rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Detectives rescued two schoolboys from Gazipur yesterday, six days into their missing from Mymensingh.

The victims are eighth grader Sadrul Islam Roman, 13, and sixth grader Yeasin, 12, of Ishwarganj municipality area.

They are the students of Biswashari Pilot High School and Char Nikla High School in Ishwarganj respectively.

As the boys went missing on September 19, family members lodged general diaries with Ishwarganj Police Station the following day.

Police said the two left their houses willingly to avoid huge pressure from their parents for study



Members of Border Guard Bangladesh during a drive early yesterday seized huge banned Indian liquor, bidi and cannabis from bordering Rajai area in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR