

# Unregulated snail collection raises concerns in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Indiscriminate collection of snails from croplands and swamp areas has raised alarms in Kulna.

This practice has also spread to neighbouring districts such as Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jashore, and Barishal.

Snails are primarily used as feed in shrimp enclosures and hatcheries.

The demand for snail meat is driven by its effectiveness in promoting rapid shrimp growth, making it popular among the region's approximately half a million shrimp farmers. Locally, a 50 kg bag of snails sells for between Tk 500 and Tk 650, with hundreds of bags traded daily across Khulna, including Koyra, Paikgachha, Terokhada, Dumuria, and Rupsha upazilas.

However, experts warn that the unregulated collection of snails is severely disrupting the ecological balance. Snails play a vital role in agriculture and water purification, contributing to soil fertility, controlling rodent populations, and providing food for local fish species. Their removal is causing significant environmental harm.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Experts urge farmers to conserve snails by reducing pesticide use, prohibiting collection during their breeding season from June to August, and raising public awareness about their ecological importance.

Despite these warnings, snail

collection remains high. In Terokhada upazila, many collectors are seen gathering snails from water bodies like Bhutia Beel and Basuakhali Beel.

Collectors like Abdur Rahim from Naliarchar say the peak season runs from June to October, with individuals

able to collect and sell 3-4 bags daily, providing additional income with minimal investment.

Urmila Biswas, who processes snails, said her earnings have supported her family and funded her sons' education.

Imran Sheikh, another collector, employs workers to assist in collection, selling snails to wholesale buyers.

Shrimp farmer Monoj Boiragi said snails are a more affordable and effective feed option compared to fish meal.

Environmental scientists emphasise the crucial role snails play in water purification and soil health. Sadhon Chandra Swarnakar, assistant professor at Khulna University, warned that indiscriminate harvesting disrupts these functions, leading to declines in water quality and soil health.

According to Nirmal Kumar Paul, divisional forest officer in Khulna, snails are classified as wild species under the Wild Animals (Preservation and Security) Act, 2012, which prohibits their collection and trade without permission.

Violations can lead to imprisonment for up to six months and fines of Tk 50,000.

## Rain damages 60pc

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but the water level was too high. All my investment has been lost."

"Almost all the ponds and enclosures in 10 unions of the upazila have been affected. Some farmers tried to fence their enclosures with nets, but most failed to protect their fish," said Saikat Mallick, fisheries officer of Paikgachha upazila.

"We are working to

help farmers recover," he added.

The district's fisheries officer, Jaydeb Paul, reported that 5,810 tonnes of fish and 7,321 tonnes of harvest-ready shrimp were washed away over the last three days.

"Shrimp farmers are the most affected, as it is their harvest season. We are working to provide incentives to support the affected farmers," he said.

## Fear, insecurity grip

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suspect in the case, while the other culprits are at large, leaving the family members amid fear and insecurity.

They are also going through much financial strains.

"Our family was dependent on my father's pension. The assailants killed my father, while his pension has stopped coming as it has not been transferred to our mother's name yet. The main culprit, Miraj Sheikh, is still at large. We are constantly living in fear and insecurity, often not being able to stay in our own home," said Priyanti Chatterjee, victim's younger daughter and a student of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University.

"The union parishad

chairman went into hiding after fall of the government, so we could not obtain my father's death certificate. My mother needed 32 stitches on her head, I needed 12. Every month we need medicine alone worth around Tk 8,000. I work as a primary school teacher, but my earning is barely enough to bear all expenses of the family," said Jhuma Chatterjee.

Contacted, Mohammad Raselur Rahman, additional superintendent of police (crime and operations) in Bagerhat, said the family does not need to feel terrified.

"We have arrested one suspect while efforts are on to arrest others. Policemen patrol the locality of the victim's house often at night," he said.

## Women fatality high

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Normal platelet counts range between 150,000 and 250,000 per microlitre of blood. A dangerously low count often signals a critical condition, especially in dengue patients.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, an associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, explained the added risks women face, particularly pregnant women and those with comorbidities such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

"Female patients are vulnerable. If infected with dengue during menstruation or pregnancy, they require special attention. If left untreated or brought to the hospital late, they risk developing dengue shock syndrome, which can be fatal," Dr Ahsan said.

He said the signs of severe dengue include severe stomach aches, breathing difficulties, vomiting, and bleeding from the gums or nose.

"If a patient showing these symptoms isn't hospitalised within 24 hours, they risk developing dengue shock syndrome," he added.

The professor added the social neglect of women's

health exacerbates their vulnerability.

"Patriarchal norms often delay women's access to medical care. In many cases, families only bring them to the hospital when it is too late," Dr Ahsan remarked.

Three more deaths were reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 141 this year.

During the period, 829 more patients were hospitalised with viral fever, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

A total of 25,701 dengue cases have been reported since January 1, 2024.

## Yunus seeks

FROM PAGE 3 this and showed interest in increasing their involvement in Bangladesh.

Referring to the meeting, Shafiqul said Gates Foundation's interest in increasing their support in the health sector of Bangladesh means increasing the quality of health services in Bangladesh and creating new jobs.

## It had no legal basis

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representatives -- banned the activities of Shibir, an associated student body of Jamaat, a party that opposed Bangladesh's independence and supported the Pakistan army during the Liberation War.

Farhad's shibir identity came to light on Sunday night, a day after Abu Shadik (Kayem), revealed himself as DU Shibir president.

Farhad is a student of the 2017-18 academic session at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research.

Responding to allegations of practicing secret politics, Farhad said, "Hundreds of our leaders and activists have gone missing or paid with their lives. We couldn't reveal

our identity for fear of being killed by the Awami fascist government."

He said until 2009, Shibir practiced politics openly whenever possible.

Denying accusations of Shibir's involvement in violence, Farhad said, "If you search on Google, you'll find that all incidents of cutting veins are linked to Chhatra League, not Shibir."

When asked whether many Shibir leaders were involved in formulating the nine-point demand of the anti-discrimination student movement, he said, "Everyone forgot their party identity, regardless of their views, during the student uprising. As a result, taking credit for whose plan was implemented contradicts the spirit of the movement."

## It's false and absurd

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Channel i thinks this case might have been filed to obscure various personal matters and potentially harass or defame the five directors. The directors have decided to contest the false allegations legally.

Brownia, a presenter

of Channel i and also a chairman of Swarna Kishori, filed the case against Shykh Seraj, chief news editor of Channel i and four others -- Zahir Uddin Mahmud Mamun, Mukit Majumder Babu, Abdur Rashid Majumder Parvez, and Riaz Ahmed Khan.

## Tourism in turmoil

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Countrywide political unrest on the eve of the national elections, severe heat waves during March-April, heavy rains starting from June and the mass uprising in July-August has led to few tourists visiting the country, he said.

Sylhet is one of the most popular tourist destinations. Most spots in Sylhet get crowded during the winter and rainy seasons; but this year the scenario is different.

Sumat Nuri Juwel, former president of Sylhet Hotel and Resort Owner Association, said, "Till July it was devastating for the industry compared to previous years. But we are witnessing a positive wind and hope the upcoming winter season will be positive."

"For months till September, not a single person came to visit Ratargul. The people like us who solely rely on tourists renting our boats, suffered the most," said Sona Miah, a boatman of Ratargul Swamp Forest.

Due to the recent turmoil in the country, few tourists are interested in

visiting Cox's Bazar, said Abu Talib Shah, Assistant General Manager of Hotel Cox Today.

He admitted that the recent incidents of harassing women and third gender people in the beach and town have impacted tourists' interest in Cox's Bazar. He added that the administration is ensuring tight security for tourists.

He said around 40 percent of rooms have been booked at their hotel ahead of tourism day, but it is far less than previous year's bookings.

M o h a m m a d Rafeuzzaman, president of the Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh, the apex body of travel agencies, said compared to the last year, the business has faced losses.

"Now everyone is planning around the upcoming season. I request the government to look into the tourism sector," he said.

Santus Kumar Deb, former chairman of department of Tourism and Hospitality Management of Dhaka University, said tourists will not visit without proper security.

## Youth's role key

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public access to information and social accountability practices.

Jasmin Nahar, senior assistant secretary of the National Institute of Local Government, said training on the RTI Act and gender issues is now included at all levels of local government.

Zahirul Islam, deputy director of Brotee, criticised the government's decision to shut down the internet during social unrest, saying

such actions fuel rumours.

Ruhi Naz, assistant director of Research Initiatives Bangladesh, pointed to the lack of citizen inclusion in decision-making for mega projects.

"The Rooppur nuclear power plant and transit facilities to India are examples where transparency was lacking. The RTI Act is crucial to ensure accountability in such cases," she said.

## JETnet-BD launched

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Md Abul Kalam Azad, manager of the Just Energy Transition (JET) team at ActionAid Bangladesh, outlined the network's goals and the necessity of a collective effort towards a renewable energy future.

Prof Mohammad Tamim emphasised the importance of government transparency and accountability in the energy sector, citing the home solar system's decline due to the previous government's political drive for 100 percent electrification.

Shafiqul Alam of IEEEFA pointed out the need to expedite the potential of rooftop solar power in industries and commercial buildings.

He urged for lower import duties on high-quality solar accessories, favourable financing, and stronger support from the Sustainable and Renewable

Energy Development Authority.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem from CPD highlighted the importance of phasing out coal-based power plants and creating a detailed action plan for building a renewable energy-dependent supply chain.

World Bank senior energy specialist Mbuso Gwafila recommended focusing more on biogas and biomass-based electricity.

Prof Khasru Mohammad Selim from Independent University stressed the need for local-level technological innovations, such as electric rickshaw charging stations and solar microgrids, with women and youth involvement.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, expressed hope that JETnet-BD would help achieve a 100 percent renewable energy transition.

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GD-551

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16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka  
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GD-522