

Hilsha export from Barisal dwindles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Export of Hilsha fish to India from Barisal is facing a serious setback allegedly due to a "controversial" government decision, exporters say.

The export volume has dwindled to 2-3 tonnes daily now from 20-30 tonnes two years back and may stop anytime, they told this correspondent yesterday.

The setback started in 2002 when the government enhanced the export subsidy on frozen food to 10 per cent of export value from five per cent earlier and attached a condition to avail the benefit.

As per the condition, an exporter of frozen fish has to be a member of the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association

(BFFEA) to get the 10 per cent subsidy.

Earlier, Hilsha exporters used to get five per cent export subsidy along with BFFEA members as there was no such condition.

But Hilsha exporters can not be BFFEA members as they do not have freezing plants, a mandatory provision for membership, made by the BFFEA, they said.

All the eight Hilsha exporters in Barisal applied for BFFEA membership but were denied as they do not have freezing plants, said Yusuf Ali Shikdar, president of Barisal District Fish Exporters and Importers Association.

He said the Bangladesh Bank in a circular enhanced the export subsidy to 10 per cent but attached a condition that 'only members of

the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) will get the benefit.'

When asked why Barisal Hilsha exporters do not have freezing plants, he said they do not need this.

"Export of Hilsha from Barisal to India by road takes 6 to 7 hours only. Packing the fish in wooden boxes with ice is enough for this short period."

This is hygienic and approved by the Standardization Division of the Fishery Department.

"Besides importers in India prefer this preservation system. They do not want frozen Hilsha."

"So we do not need to have freezing factory".

But BFFEA denied us membership on this plea, he said.

Exporter Indrajit Kumar Das said Hilsha export now brings a very small profit as market prices in Barisal are higher. "At times we have to incur loss".

Many disappointed exporters have left the business and some others will follow if they do not get the export subsidy.

They said the Barisal fish exporters' association gave several letters to the finance ministry to change or withdraw this decision but to no effect.

Besides, BFFEA members get bank loan and other export facilities, which are denied to Hilsha exporters, they alleged.

Compulsory membership of a non-government organization to get government assistance is ridiculous, they said.

Fortune from courtyard fallow land

Landless Subal earns Tk 3 lakh a year from 30 decimal lemon garden

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

Landless Subal Chandra Biswas, once a poor day labourer, is now a rich man. His earnings up to Tk three lakh a year from his lemon garden on only 30 decimal land in the courtyard.

He expanded his garden to 30 decimal in the same year. The number of plants grew to 225.

"Next year, I earned Tk 60,000. It was beyond my imagination."

"As price of lemon was higher that year, I earned the amount from only 50 plants," a giggling

Subal said.

"My average income is around Tk 25,000 a month. I earn about Tk 3 lakh a year as each plant yields 1,600 to 1,800 lemons each season".

Lemon cultivation needs small investment but the return is big.

"I invested Tk 5,000 only," he said.

"My younger brother Dusal Kumar will appear at MA examination next year", a proud Subal

said.

He usually uses cow dung, TSP, Potash in the garden.

According to him, five months of the Bangla year -- from Baishakh to Bhadra -- is the peak season of lemon harvest.

He said he had faced problem in marketing. "Now, vegetable traders come to my house and buy lemon", he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Subal Chandra nursing his lemon garden in the courtyard. The photo was taken on Tuesday

Nilphamari politics hots up over mofiz

JP rally demands apology from State Minister Milon, threatens of hartal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Amid mounting tension in the town, Jatiya Party and ruling BNP's student front Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) held rallies at venues 50 yards apart on Friday, castigating each other over a comment made at a BNP function on June 6 addressed by State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon.

The rival parties' programmes were however held without any untoward incident as a strong contingent of police was on guard in the area.

At the June 6 function, Nilphamari district BNP Secretary Anisul Arefin allegedly said that the people of the district were 'mofiz' (a work used to call some one fool) because "they always do a mistake during election by not voting for the right party for their development".

Being simple-hearted, they were befooled and mad to vote for JP in 1996 and for Awami League in 2001, he said.

Milon, hailing from Chandpur and minister-in-charge for Nilphamari district, had said in his speech that 'mofiz' was the name of his uncle and that he came to know that the word (mofiz) is used here to call some one fool.

Local political parties cashed in on these comments.

The JP at its rally Friday afternoon demanded an apology from the state minister for use of the "derogatory" word in public against Nilphamari people and threatened of hartal for non-compliance.

Speakers at the JP rally also alleged that abusive words were

used at the June 6 function against its Chairman HM Ershad, a man from neighbouring Rangpur. It was held near the Smriti Amlan, a monument built in memory of martyred freedom fighters.

It was presided over by JP Poura unit President Kairat Hossen Shah and addressed by, among others, by party leader and District Chairman Samity President Shahjahan Chowdhury, central Joint Convenor Joynal Abedin, former JP lawmaker Ahsan Ahmed and Bazlur Rahman, central Organising Secretary of JP's labour front Jatiya Samik Party.

They said State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon insulted the people of the district by calling them 'mofiz'. They said Nilphamari produced some great sons like Moshiur Rahman Jada Mia, Kazi Abdul Kader, Dabiruddin Ahmed and Khairat Hossen. None has the right to insult the people of Nilphamari, glorified by so renowned national leaders, they said.

They demanded an apology from the state minister. Otherwise, a hartal will be called.

During the Jatiya Party rally, a big JCD procession crossed the area but no untoward incident took place as police maintained tight security.

The JCD rally held in front of BNP office was presided over by its district unit president Kazi Akhteruzzaman Jewel and addressed by, among others, JCD leaders Mosharuddin Azam, AKM Habibur Rahman, Mukhtar Hossen, Sadar upazila BNP Secretary Mir Selim Farooq, JP leader new entrant to the party from JP Anisur Rahman Coco and

They said some identified quarters are trying to malign BNP and mislead the people when the district is going ahead on the path of development under the leadership of Engineer Shahrin Islam Tuhin.

They said the local correspondent of prestigious national daily Prothom Alo is an 'Awami agent' (agent of opposition Awami League) and trying to mislead the people and defame the daily by giving distorted news to serve partisan interest.

Followers of Shaheed Zia will not sit idle if the vested quarters try to do any harm to the people of Nilphamari, they said.

Meanwhile Alamgir Sarker, National Executive Committee member of BNP from Nilphamari, has asked Nilphamari correspondents of daily Jankanthan and Prothom Alo to show documents in favour of their June 8 reports that State Minister Milon used the work 'mofiz' to insult the people of Nilphamari.

He said that total matter is suspicious and conspiracy. The state minister addressed the function on June 6 but the people present there did not react.

"Jubo League and Chattra League brought out processions and held rallies on June 9 after seeing distorted reports published in the two dailies on June 8", he said.

"Jatiya Party also staged protest on June 11 after seeing the reports", he said.

"So it is clear that it is a conspiracy".

"Jubo League and Chattra League brought out processions and held rallies on June 9 after seeing distorted reports published in the two dailies on June 8", he said.

When contacted, police said a case was filed with Mymensingh Sadar police station in this connection on Tuesday (July 8). They are trying to arrest the culprits.

The victims said the dispute centred four decimal land but they occupied the house and the oil on 19 decimal land.

Mymensingh Puja Uddipan Parishad and the district unit of Hindu Boudhia Cristian Oikya Parishad condemned the incident.

Over Tk 1cr power bills due from B'baria pourasava

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Brahmanbaria Pourasava is overburdened with debts, which is affecting development activities, its chairman Hafizur Rahman Mulla Kachi has said.

It has a debt of over Tk 2,28,62,408 and a bank balance of Tk 23,10,638 only, the newly elected chairman told a press conference here recently. The debts include over Tk one crore electricity bills.

"I inherited an empty fund but lot of debts", he said.

"I can not even pay April's salary to pourasava staff", he lamented. The salary bill is Taka 14,99,042, according to pourasava officials.

It has to pay Tk 25,00,000 annually till the year 2018 under the Town Infrastructure Development Project-2.

The pourasava can not utilise a fund of Tk 2.35 crore, collected from a supermarket and lying with bank, due to legal problem, he said.

Though Brahmanbaria is an A-class pourasava, it can not provide minimum facilities to residents. Most of the roads are in very bad condition.

Minority family evicted from house at Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Some people allegedly belonging to the ruling party has evicted a minority family and occupied their house and an oil mill on 19 decimal land in Mymensingh town, according to a case filed by the victims' family.

But none has been arrested, victims Dinnath Prashad and Rajendra Prashad alleged while talking to this correspondent on Friday over phone.

They said they had a dispute with one Ferdous Ahmed Sawpan over four decimal land at Zila School Road in the town. A case in this regard was under trial.

They also alleged that they were being threatened for some time and they had filed a general diary with Sadar police earlier.

On Monday last, some people belonging to the ruling party forcibly evicted them and occupied their house and oil mill, they alleged.

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'Give khas land to landless people'

PM urged at press conference in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Satkhira District Landless Society general secretary Ali Noor Khan on Thursday appealed to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to fulfill her promise of distribution of government 'khas' land among genuine landless people of the district living on khas land for years together.

"Attack on landless people and snatching of their valuables by land grabbers and their hired musclemen are common phenomena".

He appealed it to the PM while reading a written statement at a press conference at Satkhira Reporters' Club.

He reminded the PM about her promise she gave at a big public meeting at Delisharar football ground on August 18 in 1998. During her speech she promised, if BNP comes to power, she would fulfill all the demands of landless people.

The landless leader also demanded arrest and punishment to land grabbers. "Otherwise the landless people will launch a tougher agitation to realise their 8-point demands" he said.



Miscreants allegedly hired by some local influentials on Tuesday felled 300 'Kewra' trees planted and nursed by landless people on Galghesha shoal in Kaliganj upazila, Satkhira.

Punishment to 'rapist' demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Local people on Friday handed over a memorandum to the Fulchhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) demanding exemplary punishment to a rapist who raped a three-year-old girl child on June 7.

BRTC sources said some muslims hired by private bus owners forcibly stopped a BRTC bus as it was coming out of the Daulatdia depot with passengers for its maiden trip to Meherpur via Kalaroa upazila.

The gang then stormed into a hotel at Rajbari town and threatened BRTC Traffic Officer Azam Chudhury of "dire consequence" if they try to ply BRTC bus on the route.

BRTC sources said they informed the matter to high authority.

BRTC Chairman Tamur Alam Khodkar reached Rajbari on Friday and held a meeting with leaders of Rajbari Bus Owners Association, but to no effect.

Offering biscuit, rapist Suruj Mia of Fulchhari Upazila Sadar called a minor daughter of Anil

Three 'outlaws' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Joint forces on Friday arrested three 'outlaws' from their houses.

The arrested are Ganesh Mondal, 32, of Raipur village, Habibur Rahman, 35, son of Fatik Moral of Danganalta village and Emdadul Haq, 30, son of Khoda Baksia Sheikh of Machchiara village in Tala upazila.

Ganesh Mondal was arrested from his house at Raipur village, Habibur Rahman was arrested from his house at Danganalta village and Emdadul Haq was arrested from his house at Machchiara village, according to police. All of them are active members of the outlawed New Biplabi Communist Party (ML-Mrinal faction).

3 hurt while making bomb in Ashuganj

25 held on other charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A suspected Polio affected child patient has been detected in Pirganj upazila in the district.

This is the first patient detected in the country since 2000.

The patient is 6 year-old Rupom, son of Golam Mostafa of Mithipur village. Rangpur Civil Surgeon Dr Zainal Abedin visited Rupom at Pirganj Upazila Health Complex on Wednesday and suspected that the child could be suffering from Polio.

He asked doctors there to refer the patient to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. After tests at RMCH, the child could be sent to Dhaka for further tests, doctors said.

Clue to B'baria businessman murder found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Important clues to the murder of Sheikh Shah Alam, a prominent businessman in the town, have been found, police said yesterday.

The three persons arrested in connection with the murder made important disclosures to police during interrogation on remand, police said. But they declined to give details for the sake of investigation.