

# 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 food 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.

## 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 pourasabha staff", he lamented. The salary bill is Taka 14,99,042, according to pourasabha officials.

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

The pourasabha 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 pourasavas, 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, Natrakona,

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 Proshad 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.

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 Udjapon Parishad and the district unit of Hindu Bouddha Cristian Oikkya Parishad condemned the incident.

## 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.

Before submission of the memo they brought out a procession and paraded the main streets of the upazila. A protest meeting was also held where Shahidul Islam, Habibur Rahman, Subol Chandra Ghosh and Sujit Roy addressed.

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

## Fortune from courtyard fallow land Landless Subol 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.

His success is a topic of discussion for many in Magura Sadar upazila. District agriculture officials now visit his garden and tell others to follow the example.

Subol remains busy taking care of plants or harvesting lemon which brought him fortune from extreme poverty.

Fifty year-old Subal was a jobless man in Katakhal village. He inherited only 30 decimal land in the courtyard, which remained fallow earlier.

He had to work as a day labourer and pull rickshaw at times to feed his serve member family with three sons, one daughter and one younger brother.

His younger brother, then an HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) student, had stopped going to school due to poverty.

Fortune smiled on them after Subal planted some lemon saplings in the courtyard out of curiosity about six years back.

He could not imagine that some day this would make his fortune.

"Being influenced by AED Block Supervisor Abdul Momin, I gave more time and labour to nurse the plants. The courtyard turned into a lemon garden in 2000," a smiling Subal told this correspondent during a recent visit.

One day, AED (Agriculture Extension Department) officials came to visit his lemon garden. They encouraged and assured him assistance.

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 Dudal 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.



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

PHOTO: STAR

## '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.

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.



PHOTO: STAR

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

## 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 Baksa 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 Biplobi Communist Party (ML-Mrinal faction).

## SNAPS

### Suspected Polio patient detected in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur  
A suspected Polio affected child patient has been detected in Pirganj upzila 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 Upzila 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 Shaha 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.

The three arrested persons were produced before court yesterday on completion of remand. They are Kanu Chawdhury, Sanu Mia and Fazlur Rahman. But the main accused is yet to be nabbed.

Shah Alam was slaughtered at Golakata village on May 27.

## 3 hurt while making bomb in Ashuganj 25 held on other charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Three persons were injured while making bomb at a house in Charchar Tola village near Zia Fertilizer Factory in Ashuganj upzila on Tuesday, police said yesterday.

Police arrested the house owner, Abdul Kuddus and his wife Farid Begum.

The three injured persons had escaped before police reached there. Police later arrested one of the injured -- Saiful Islam, 21, son of late Joyal of the village-- from a clinic while he was taking treatment. The two others fled away sensing presence of police.

Saiful was admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital under police guard.

## 2 killed by husbands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two pregnant housewives were beaten to death allegedly by dowry-greedy husbands on Thursday.

Police said Hosne Ara (Polly), 26, mother of two children, was beaten to death allegedly by her husband Abdul Rahim at Deara village in Kalaroa upzila.

The victim's brother Rafiqul Islam told police that his sister was killed for Tk 10,000 dowry.

Police sent the body to Satkhira hospital for autopsy.

Another pregnant housewife, Taslima Khatun, 20, was killed allegedly by her husband Abdul Mannan at Danga Nalfa village in Tala upzila, also for dowry.

Meanwhile, Brahmanbaria police in a special drive arrested 25 people from different areas of the district on Friday on charge of crimes including robbery, drug peddling, smuggling, rape and murder. They include one fugitive, police said.

## BRTC service from Kushtia stopped by pvt operators

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

BRTC (Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation) buses

did not roll out of its Daulatdia depot after inauguration of its Kushtia-Dhaka service on Monday due to resistance by private bus owners.

BRTC sources said some musclemen 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 Kushtia Tuesday morning.

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 Khodokar reached

Rajbari on Friday and held a meeting with leaders of Rajbari Bus Owners Association, but to no effect.