

# Unabated deer poaching in the Sundarbans

Nexus between poachers and a section of corrupt forest officials alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Deer poaching in Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, is going unabated, violating law.

A large number of spotted deer were killed in the last two months, sources said.

On December 11, a team of officials from Kobadak Forest Station recovered a slaughtered deer from a boat in Palkati area of the forest.

On December 10, local people caught two alleged deer poachers -- Samir Gazi and Shahbaz -- from Parshemari ferry terminal area in Shyamnagar along with three slaughtered deer. They were handed over to Forest Officer Md Delwar Hossain Forest Guard Milon.

Local people later alleged that the forest officials released the poachers along with their prey after taking bribe. The incident created resentment in the area.

On December 4, a team from Kalkhali Forest Station in a raid recovered two slaughtered deer from a boat on Mathabanga canal in the Sundarbans. Sensing presence of forest officials, the poachers escaped.

On November 21, officials from Kalkhali Forest Office recovered 36 kilograms of deer meat from a shrimp enclosure owned by one Arshad Ali.

On November 23, one BM Harun of Datnakhali village in Shyamnagar upazila recovered two slaughtered deer from one Barik Kayal of the area but no case was recorded.

On November 1, Gabura Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Shafiqul Azam Lenin recovered two slaughtered deer from poachers Abdul Mozid and Rouf. They were handed over to Burigoini Forest Office officials but no action was taken against them, it was alleged.

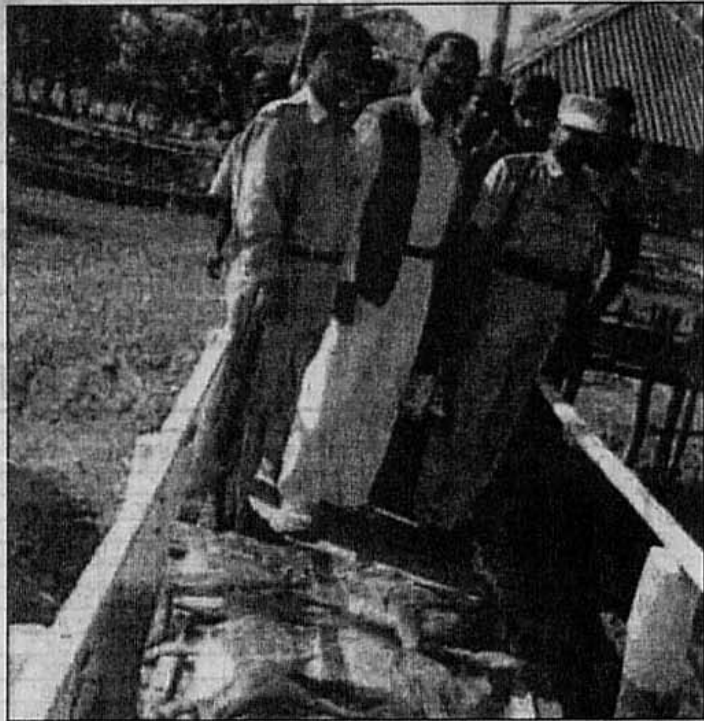
Allegations have it that a section of leaders and activists of political parties and local government bodies in connivance with some corrupt forest officials and staff are poaching deer in the Sundarbans.

Witnesses seeking anonymity claimed that the poachers go to the Sundarbans by taking permission from forest officials as visitors.

About two years back, a local UP Chairman along with 10 people, most of them local government officials, went to Kakratola area in the Sundarbans boarding three trawlers.

They stayed there for three days and killed 12 deer, local people claimed.

On return home, the UP Chairman arranged a function and entertained guests, reportedly with



Kalkhali forest officials recovered two slaughtered deer from a boat on the Mathabanga canal recently.

venison (deer meat).

Local people said entertaining guests with venison is considered prestigious in areas near the Sundarbans.

The unabated poaching is continuing for long, which is threatening the forest's spotted deer population, famed worldwide.

High demand of horns and hides of deer are the prime targets of the poachers, local people said while talking to this correspondent during a visit.

Deer hunting in the Sundarbans is banned. Moreover, the UNESCO has been declared the forest a World Heritage Site to protect its flora and fauna.

It was gathered that a section of government officials posted in areas near the forest also visit the Sundarbans often and kill deer.

Besides, a section of licensed gun holders is also involved in it.

Venison is easily available in villages near the forest and trading in it is an open secret there. It is sold at Tk 150 to 180 per kilogram.

Local people claimed that law enforcers and forest officials are aware of sale of venison.

When contacted, Satkhira Range Officer of the Sundarbans said, some of the poachers were caught and action taken. Forest guards guard the forest so stop poaching. But the manpower is too little to the need and they are not well equipped. Their number should be increased, he said.

## Is it a day to rejoice?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Some government and private establishments in Barisal city were decorated with kaleidoscopic lights on the Martyred Intellectuals Day on December 14.

The city dwellers expressed their surprise and resentment at this. Many of them talking to this correspondent questioned whether it was due to ignorance or audacity.

The buildings illuminated include the Barisal divisional office of T and T, Aswani Kumar Town Hall, Barisal City Corporation (BCC), Sazrani Supermarket, Venue Supermarket and some cinema halls.

When contacted, Divisional Engineer of T&T Jagadish Mondol said, "It was a mistake. Preparations were made at a time for Martyred Intellectuals Day and Victory Day programmes. The lighting arrangement was actually made for the Victory Day."

Authorities of other government establishments were not available for comment.

## Two 'muggers' lynched in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two alleged muggers were beaten to death by mob in Badurtala Munshipukurpur in Panchlaish area of the city on Tuesday.

They were caught while exchanging fire with police. Police also recovered two guns from them.

Police said six armed muggers came to the spot by an auto-rickshaw. As patrol police challenged them, they opened fire resulting in a gunfight.

At one stage two muggers received bullet injuries while others managed to flee. Local people caught the bullet-hit muggers and beat them dead.

## Forest guards trained, given sophisticated arms: DFO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A two-day training for Sundarbans forest guards on use of sophisticated firearms ended at the Khulna police lines on Sunday.

This is part of programme to enhance vigilance in the forest to stop poaching of deer and tiger and pilferage of forest resources including timber, according to the Conservator of Forests.

Other steps are also being taken to check crimes in the Sundarbans.

Thirty-three SLRs and 20 Chinese rifles have been given to guards in the Eastern Wing of Sundarbans Forest Division (SFD). The Western Wing got 70 SLRs and 180 Chinese rifles to contain crimes.

DFO Shaikh Mizanur Rahman of Eastern Wing said there are 1077 forest guards and boatmen in four ranges in the eastern and western wings of the Sundarbans.

The Ministry of Forests has undertaken a plan to equip them with sophisticated arms. All outdated arms will be withdrawn in phases, he said. All the forest guards will be trained and given sophisticated firearms, he said.

# Bright prospect for rubber plantation in Sherpur

Idris Ali earns over Tk 1.5 lakh a month from 5000 rubber trees: Plantation in 20,000 acres of fallow land can meet country's demand

JAHANGIR ALAM back from Sherpur

NETRAKONA: Prospect of rubber cultivation is very bright in Garo hills in Sherpur because of favourable soil and weather conditions.

Chemical components of the soil, temperature and annual rainfall in bordering area of Sandakura, Bakakura, Samaschura, Rangta, Burunga, Halchati, Nakshi, Gajni, Tawakucha, Karnajura, Balijuri, Garamara, Baromary, Choudkirtila, Daodara and Hatipagar in Shreebardi and Jinaigati upazilas in the district are suitable for rubber cultivation, experts and officials say.

At least 20,000 tonnes of raw rubber can be produced in these areas, sources at Modhupur Rubber Development Zone office told this correspondent during a recent visit.

Forest Department sources said there are 20,000 acres of fallow lands under it in the areas, where rubber can be cultivated.

Idris Ali, an industrialist in Sherpur, raised a rubber garden in Sandakura in 1983 on 54 acres of land. He is harvesting raw rubber from his Salma Rubber Project since 1998, about 15 years after plantation.

Talking to The Daily Star he said the soil of bordering hills in Sherpur is favourable for rubber cultivation. If Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC) takes step to cultivate rubber in the 20,000 acres of fallow lands, 20,000 to 25,000 tonnes of raw rubber could

be produced annually.

Idris Ali said, rubber cultivation is very profitable but raising a garden is time-consuming and expensive. He said he had to spend a huge amount of money in 15 years to raise the garden.

Now he extracts 325 to 350 kilograms of liquid rubber from 5000 rubber trees per day and earns Tk 1,50,000 to 1,60,000 in a month from

thesale.

Salma Rubber Project is the lone such project in the private sector in greater Mymensingh.

Idris Ali said he wants to expand his garden to 5000 acres. He has applied to the Forest Department for long-term lease of lands but is yet to get any response.

The country's annual demand for raw rubber is about 60,000

tonnes now, the sources at Modhupur Rubber Development Zone office said. The production is 40,000 tonnes in BFIDC rubber estates. There are rubber gardens in greater Sylhet district also.

If BFIDC cultivates rubber in 20,000 acres of fallow land in Sherpur, the country's demand can be met, officials said.



A partial view of Idris Ali's rubber garden (left) and extraction of white liquid rubber

PHOTO: STAR

# 12 die of diarrhoea in Bogra

Shortage of IV saline at Mohammed Ali Hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Twelve persons died of diarrhoea in two weeks here, according to Acting Civil Surgeon Dr Nur-Un-Nahar.

Diarrhoea Control Room sources identified 11 of them as Khaza Mia, 45, Samsul Haque, 4, Jesmin, 9, Kanak, 12, Halima, 60, ten-month-old Hasi, Ritu, 3, Buli, 60, Rumi Akter, 10, Bala and Niuti Bala, 40.

Shortage of Intravenous (IV) fluid hampers treatment at Bogra Mohammed Ali Hospital

(BMAH), according to Acting Civil Surgeon office sources.

Hospital sources said, at least 170 diarrhoea patients were admitted to BMAH last week.

Two medical teams are working in Katur Basri area under Sadar upazila to combat the water-borne disease.

According to Acting Civil Surgeon office sources, more than 1,300 people were attacked with the disease in 12 upazilas including Sadar upazila.

## Interest-free loans distributed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A UK-based NGO, Muslim Aid Bangladesh (MAB) on Monday distributed Tk 4,000 interest-free loan to each of 50 poor families of Sadar upazila.

The loan was distributed at a function held at local Zilla Parishad auditorium under a micro-credit programme. Moulana Delwar Hossain presided over the function.

International Islamic University Director Prof Mohammad Ali Akbar, MAB Assistant Country Director Mahfuzur Rahman, Programme Co-ordinator Mohammad Obaidur Rahman and Programme Officer Nazmul Haque addressed the function.

# Aman yield 5 lakh tonnes short of target in Barisal agricultural zone

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Aman production in 11 districts under Barisal agriculture zone is five lakh tonnes less than the target of 15.8 lakh tonnes this year due to recurring flood, official sources said.

Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Barisal, said the production shortfall was due to floods and late sowing. But some farmers this correspondent talked to said the production could be higher had the government supplied seeds and taken other post-flood rehabilitation measures in time.

Abdul Bari, Regional Director of DAE declined to make any comment.

The district wise estimated production is 1,03, tonnes in Barisal, 40,470 in Pirojpur, 900 in Jhalakati,

1,08,590 in Bhola, 1,07,665 in Patuakhali, 55,300 in Barguna, 37,430 in Rajbari, 17,800 in Faidpur, 5,400 in Gopalganj, 5,300 in Madaripur and 6,650 in Shariatpur, DAE sources here said.

The farmers alleged that most of the field level DAE staff in different areas did not take up rehabilitation programmes in their areas in time. The most serious problem was scarcity of seedlings. Local DAE staff should have been prepared seedbeds in time on high lands for supply of seedlings. But they did not do that, the farmers claimed.

Sources said the DAE should not go all out to offset the Aman shortfall by increasing the production of ARRI-Boro in the current season.

Barisal is considered as a rice bowl in the country and any shortfall also affects supplies in other regions.

## SNAPS

### Chudanga JCD leader held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Elite anti-crime force Kobra arrested Chudanga Jajitabadi Chhatra Dai (JCD) General Secretary Sarifuzzaman Sijar Tuesday. Police said a Kobra team raided at his house at Baganpara in the town and nabbed him. He was an accused in several cases including some for extortion. He was being interrogated till filling this report yesterday.

### 20 injured in Patuakhali clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 20 persons were injured, five of them critically in a clash over damage of paddy field between two rival groups at Chakamoiya village under Kalapara upazila on Tuesday. According to villagers, the clash ensued when six buffaloes of Adam Ali damaged aman field of Aminullah Howlader. Both the groups equipped with sticks locked in a clash. Critically injured Aminullah Howlader, 60, Abdul Latif, 35, Adam Ali, 65 Zafar Howlader, 20, and Kamal, 22, all of Chakamoiya village were admitted to Kalapara Upazila Health Complex for treatment.

### Body of youth recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Body of an unidentified youth was recovered from the Bata Shoe Centre here on Tuesday. According to police, the ill-fated young man was roasted alive in a devastating fire that broke out in the shoe centre on Thursday. Shoes and other valuables worth Tk 3 crors were gutted completely. The cause of fire could not be known.

## Torture on woman: SI, cop closed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A sub-inspector of police (SI) and a constable of Sadar thana were closed for allegedly torturing and trying to rape a woman at thana hajat during her stay there for three days.

The action was taken against them following a statement given before a magistrate against them by Maksuda Begum, 27, also mother of three children.

According to court sources, Maksuda divorced her husband Nurul Karim on July 16 this year who tortured her for dowry. She locked in marriage with Qaiyum of Bara Bighai village under Sadar upazila on October 19.

Being infuriated her former husband Nurul Karim filed a case on September 25 against five persons including Qaiyum terming them as his wife's kidnappers. But Maksuda gave another statement in court through an affidavit where she told that she had married Qaiyum divorcing former husband Nurul Karim. But SI Wahidul Islam arrested Maksuda and sent Qaiyum to court. Maksuda was kept in thana hajat for three days. Majeda Begum, mother-in-law of Maksuda prayed for sending her son's wife to court from thana hajat. The court ordered the Officer-in-Charge of the police station to send Maksuda to court and gave the aforesaid statement before first class magistrate Motiar Rahman who recorded her statement under Section 22 of Nari-o-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain. She narrated that SI Wahidul Islam and constable Giasuddin physically tortured her and tried to rape her at thana hajat. According to Maksuda's statement, Police Superintendent (SP) Shafiqul Islam closed SI Wahidul and constable Giasuddin and asked the additional police super to investigate the matter.

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স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধের  
অমর শহীদ  
ও বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের  
জানাই প্রাণঢালা  
শ্রদ্ধা ও ভালবাসা

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