

# Off-season hilsa aplenty in coastal rivers

Officials attribute it to drive for protecting mother hilsa, jatka

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

Huge catches of hilsa are being netted in the rivers and coastal waters of the southern region although the winter is usually an off-season for the popular fish.

Consumers are happy to have the fish for lower prices while the earning from hilsa export from Barisal during the first three weeks in January this year sees nine times rise compared to that in the same period last year, said officials of Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC).

Fish merchants have urged development of processing industry, setting up of cold storage and ensuring electricity and ice supply for preservation and availability of hilsa round the year.

Following unexpected netting of hilsa at different fishing points of rivers, estuaries and coastal fishing zones during the last three weeks, its price has come down to about half from three months earlier, Aslam Khan, manager of hilsa trading house named Five Star, said during this correspondent's visit to local hilsa wholesale market and fish port.

Per maund of hilsa weighing 600

grams is now selling for Tk 8,000 while the price is Tk 9,000 for a maund of hilsa weighing 800 grams and Tk 16,000-17,000 for a maund of hilsa weighing 1,000 grams or over, he said.

Every day 8-10 fishing trawlers, each carrying 150-200 maunds of hilsa, reach Barisal fishing port from Dhal Char, Daulat Khan, Manpura, Alipur and Bhola, said Abul Kalam, a worker engaged in unloading hilsa at the port.

Rabiul Islam, manager of Barisal fish landing port of Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation, said 10,955 maunds of hilsa was exported from the landing station during January 1-23 this year whereas January 2010 saw export of only 1,190 maunds of hilsa.

Revenue earnings during January 1-23 (Tk 2,62,000) this year far exceeded that of 12 months (Tk 1,40,000) of last year when only 7,300 maunds of hilsa was exported from this landing station, he said.

Bangladesh government on April 12, 2008 fixed the minimum price of hilsa weighing between 600 grams and one kg at six dollars per kg, which is eight

dollars for hilsa between one kg to 1.5 kg and 12 dollars for the fish weighing over 1.5 kg, related sources said.

Wahiduzzaman, Barisal district fishery officer, and Bankim Chandra Mandal, assistant director of Barisal office of the fishery directorate, claimed that availability of hilsa in the off season is the result of their drives to prevent catching of jatka (young hilsa) and mother hilsa.

"We are happy over netting of huge hilsa in winter. But we are facing storage and packaging problems due to acute shortage of ice production and electricity supply and absence of cold storage and fish processing plants in the region," said Yusuf Ali, secretary of Bangladesh Non-frozen Fish Exporters Association and Barisal Fish Merchants Association.

Daily average 800 maunds of hilsa exporting to Dhaka, Chittagong, Pabna, Khulna of Bangladesh and Kolkata of India from Barisal and we have to sell rest stocks at local markets in almost at throw-away prices as the item is perishable, he said.



Workers unload hilsa from trawlers at the fish landing station in Barisal city a couple of days ago as large catches are being netted in the Bay even during the winter, usually an off season for the popular fish.

PHOTO: STAR

# Good boro yield expected in 10 south-western districts

Farming starts in favourable weather, fertilisers at fair prices demanded

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

The officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in 10 south-western districts under Khulna division expect achievement of production target of 23,30,030 tonnes of boro paddy in the current season, which is 89,967 tonnes higher than last year's.

The farmers are expected to

cultivate boro on 5,84,497 hectares of land in Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Magura, Jessore, Narail, Bagerhat, Satkhira and Khulna districts while they cultivated 5,64,700 lakh hectares of land in the last season, said DAE officials in the division.

The cultivation has already started. Hybrid boro will be cultivated on 1,65,000 hectares, high yielding vari-

eties on 4,140,42 hectares and local varieties on 5,455 hectares of land.

Of them, the highest cultivation target has been set for Jessore district where 1,52,294 hectares will be brought under boro cultivation and the lowest 25,362 hectares in Meherpur.

Target areas of cultivation in other districts are 88,515 hectares in Jhenidah, 42,097

hectares in Magura, 37,324 hectares in Narail, 47,170 hectares in Khulna, 44,207 hectares in Bagerhat, 72,670 hectares in Satkhira, 32,275 hectares in Kushtia and 42,601 hectares in Chuadanga.

"Farmers in the region have already started plantation without any trouble. Prices of fertilisers are also now within the capacity of the farmers," Md Bazlul Haq,

additional director of DAE, Khulna division, said during his visit to Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia last week.

As this correspondent contacted DAE officials in other districts over phone, they shared similar views, saying that they got reports of good cultivation mainly because of favourable weather, proper irrigation facilities and supply of fertiliser.

"We are expecting 10 to 15 percent extra yield this year if there is no natural calamity till now in the region," said SM Shamsul Arefin, DD of DAE regional office in Kushtia.

However, farmers in the region have told about some problems including scarcity of paddy saplings, high price for water supplied by pump owners and not getting urea and non-urea fertilisers at the government fixed prices. During this correspondent's visit to a few areas in the region including Meherpur, Chuadanga and Kushtia districts, farmers said they are facing trouble to collect saplings of paddy that are selling at high prices.

Besides, power pump owners are realising high price for irrigation in different areas.

Farmers said they are to pay one-fourth of reaped paddy for

supplying water to one bigha of land from the time of starting cultivation process in the field. On an average, one-fourth of reaped paddy amounts to four maunds and its price is Tk 3000 to 3400.

Farmers termed the price too high while several power pump owners told this correspondent that it is their tradition for years. They also showed plea of diesel price.

Farmers said they are buying different urea and non-urea fertilisers for prices higher than the government fixed rates.

According to DAE sources, the government fixed Tk 600 per bag (50 kg) of urea, TSP at Tk 1100, MoP at Tk 750 and DAP at Tk 1350.

In some areas of Kushtia and Meherpur, farmers are to buy per bag of urea at Tk 680, TSP Tk 1200 to Tk 1250 and MoP at Tk 800 to Tk 820 and DAP at Tk 1400 to Tk 1500.

In some areas, the local sub-dealers are also charging high prices of fertilisers, farmers said.

"Stern action will be taken on specific allegation of price manipulation by the dealers," Bazlul Haq, additional director of DAE, Khulna, said.

He urged all to be aware about the matter.

## SCHOOLGIRL ASMA MURDER CASE

# Charges pressed against five in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police yesterday pressed charges against five people for killing schoolgirl Asma Khatun at Jiala Nalta village under Tala upazila in 2009.

The accused are Zahidul Islam, 20, son of Nur Ali Morol of Atarai village, Arman Nikari alias Sharbat, 20, son of Hafizul Islam Nikari, Azizul Islam Nikari, 22, son of Kawsar Ali Nikari, Abul Kalam, 22, son of Abdul Latif Nikari and Hafizul Islam Nikari, 25, son of Shukur Ali Nikari of village Jiala Nalta in the upazila.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Md Lutfor Rahman of Tala Police Station submitted the charge sheet.

Accused Zahidul gave a proposal to marry Asma, 15, a class ten student of Jiala Nalta Atarai Palli Mongal High School, but she refused.

Being angered for her refusal, Zahidul and his four accomplices swooped on Asma while she was going to her private tutor's house at the village at around 5:00pm on June 15 in 2009. They stabbed Asma and left the scene, leaving her critically

injured

Asma was taken to Tala Upazila Health Complex where she succumbed to her injuries soon after admission. Victim's father Md Hanif Morol filed a case with Tala Police Station against Zahidul and four others.

Meanwhile, criminals on Thursday abducted an SSC examinee while she was going to school in Kaliganj upazila to take admit card.

Police quoted locals as saying that Goutam Kumar Roy, 20, son of Sukumar Roy of Tarali village in the upazila and his two accomplices picked up the girl at around 11:00am.

Victim's father filed a case with Kaliganj Police Station against Goutam Kumar Roy, Subhas Sarkar and Binoy Sarkar of Durgapur village under the upazila.

Police arrested Binoy Sarkar, 55, one of the accused, on Friday night but could not rescue the girl as of filing of this report at 6:00pm yesterday.

Contacted, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kaliganj Police Station Syed Farid Uddin said they are trying to rescue the victim and arrest the rest two accused.



Farmers planting boro saplings at a field in Kushtia district.

PHOTO: STAR

# Wife-killer gets death as son bears witness

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

A man has been awarded death sentence for killing his wife, ironically on the basis of the evidence provided by his 10-year-old son.

Gopalganj Additional District and Sessions Judge Golam Murshed, also the judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal, yesterday delivered the verdict, ordering execution of the death sentence by hanging the convict, Tuhin Kazi.

Tuhin tied the mouth of his wife Mina Sultana and hacked her to death at Mani Khar village in Gopalganj Sadar upazila at around 9:30pm on August 10 in 2007 and police filed a case the next day, goes the prose-

cution. Tuhin's 10-year-old son Akash, the only witness to the crime, told the court that he awoke from sleep hearing groaning of his mother. Then he saw that his father was stabbing his mother with a kitchen knife. The bed and the floor were all wet with the blood gushing out of his mother's body.

The body bore the marks of about 40 strikes of the kitchen knife, adds the prosecution.

"Tuhin earlier beat up Mina for dowry and sent her to her father's house. The day before the murder, Mina's poor father persuaded her to go back to her husband's house. But Tuhin killed her," said Additional Public Prosecutor Shahiduzzaman Pintu.

Celebrating 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
**KABIGURU**  
Rabindranath Tagore  
JANUARY - SEPTEMBER

কলিম শতাব্দী পদক-২০১১

আমরা আছি আপনাত শতবৎ

কবিগুরু সার্থক জন্মবার্ষিকী শিল্পী কলিম শতাব্দীতে  
সম্মান জানাতে বৃত্তীভঙ্গসম্মতি প্রতিযোগিতার মাধ্যমে  
এক তাঁক নতুন বৃত্তীভঙ্গসম্মতি শিল্পীত সম্মানে আমরা আছি।

আয়োজক: বাংলাদেশ রবীন্দ্রসঙ্গীত শিল্পী সংস্থা  
সিটিভি পর্দাঘর  
টিভি পর্দাঘর

\*বিজয়িত জানতে পত্রিকায় চেষ্টা করুন

karok-contact:150-1-11