

Hilsa becomes dear ahead of Pahela Baishakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Price of hilsa has shot up in the coastal region ahead of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year.

Small-size hilsa is selling at Tk 1200 per kg which was Tk 300-400 a month ago.

Abdul Jabbar, a wholesaler of Katpatti area in Patuakhali town, said, "A one-kg hilsa is selling for Tk 12,000-1,500 whereas it was sold for Tk 330-400 only a month ago."

Local traders have supplied hilsa to the capital because of its high demand there ahead of Pahela Baishakh, he added.

Abul Mia, another hilsa trader of Rangabali in Galachipa upazila, said, "Fishermen are busy catching large quantities of hilsa to make more money banking on Pahela Baishakh, but most of them are frustrated due to



poor catch of this delicious fish."

Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna District Fishing Trawler Association, said, "Price of hilsa increases on local markets ahead of Pahela Baishakh."

"Five to six truckloads of hilsa are going to Dhaka and other places from Bangladesh Fish Development Centre (BFDC) in Pathorghata every day", he added.

UNB from Lalmonirhat reports: Tonnes of hilsa are

being smuggled to India ahead of Pahela Baishakh through different points in five upazilas of the bordering district every day.

Pahela Baishakh is celebrated with fried hilsa and rice in both Bangladesh and India's West Bengal and parts of Assam and Tripura states.

More than 30 fish traders are involved in smuggling in Burimari land port, Hatiabandha and Moghulghat to do brisk business because of high demand of hilsa in India

ahead of Pahela Baishakh.

Local sources said a quartet of hilsa is sold at several thousand rupees in West Bengal on Pahela Baishakh.

Banking on Baishakh, unscrupulous fish traders bring hilsa in trucks and trains from Goalundo of Rajbari, Chandpur and Barisal. Each hilsa is sold at an exorbitant price in Lalmonirhat town as bulk of fish is smuggled to India.

Meanwhile, a mobile court in Bhola on Sunday sentenced four fishermen to jail terms ranging from one month to three months for catching jatka (hilsa fry).

The convicts are Amir Hissain, 45, Babul, 40, Lokman, 25, and Heju, 32, of Tultoli village in Sadar upazila.

District Fisheries Department sources said a mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Rezaul Karim conducted a drive in the Meghna and arrested the four with 10 maunds of jatka and 2,000 metres current net.



Indigenous people including Chakma, Tripura and Marma communities as well as Bangalees join a colourful procession in Khagrachhari town yesterday marking Boisabi and Bangla New Year festivals.

Hill districts wear a festive look as Boisabi nears

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

People of Tripura, Marma, Chakma communities and Bangalees brought out a colourful procession in the town yesterday ahead of the Boishu, Sangrai, Biju (Boi-sa-bi) and the upcoming New Bangla Year 1418 festivals.

A joint committee organised the procession. The procession started from upazila parishad ground and paraded the town.

Rafiqul Alam, mayor of Khagrachhari municipality, inaugurated the programme while convener of the committee Rabi Shankar Talukdar, general secretary of Marma Unnayan Sangsad Cathowai Marma and general secretary of Tripura Kalyan Sangsad Sachin Tripura were present.

Later at a short discussion, the speakers urged the government to ensure constitutional recognition to indigenous people and take steps to protect the tradition and customs of the hill people.

The festival starts April 13 every year and continues for five days.

The name Boisabi, is an acronym for three festivals of the three main indigenous communities of CHT.

The Tripura community celebrates it as 'Boishu', the Marma calls it Sangrai or Shangraine and the Chakmas observe it as 'Biju'. Boishu, Sangrai and Biju together form Boi-sa-bi which means new Bangla year celebration.

The people of the area are now busy making traditional masks and inviting relatives and friends to the biggest festival of the indigenous people.

An upbeat Ethika Chakma from Milanpur area of the district town said, "I bought a Pinon-Hadi (a traditional Chakma dress) and four salwar kameez for the upcoming Boisabi."

Julipru Marma of Madhupur area who is now studying in India said, "I came home a few days ago to celebrate

Boisabi with family and friends and hope to have lots of fun after a long time."

Narandra Tripura, a farmer from Uttila area, told this correspondent that Boisabi is the biggest festival for the indigenous people and so they try to enjoy it fully.

Md. Shahed, a student of HSC 1st year of Khagrachhari Government College said, "I am excited because I have been invited by many indigenous friends to join Boisabi."

Different government and non-government organisations and local clubs have already chalked out various programmes including traditional sports competition and fairs in the district town to mark the occasion.

Former principal of Khagrachhari Government College Dr. Sudhik Kumar Chakma said that people of Chakma community celebrate Biju for three days from 29th of Chaitra.

"The first day of the festival is called 'Fulbiju', the second day is 'Mulbiju' and third day or Pahela Baishakh is called 'Goyjya Pojya Din'", he said.

He informed that on 'Fulbiju', Chakma people get up early in the morning, clean their houses and decorate them with flowers.

Then they take bath and float flowers in rivers, canals and springs to seek blessings of God for peace and prosperity. In the evening they go to 'Kyang' (Buddhist temple) and light candles.

On 'Mulbiju', Chakmas cook special traditional foods called 'Cewang' early in the morning and send those to the saints of the Kyangs.

The people of Tripura community celebrate 'Boishu' in two parts -- 'Harboishu' and Boishu.

Manindra Kishore Tripura, president of Tripura Kalyan Sangsad said, that the Tripura people celebrate 'Harboishu' in a similar way of 'Fulbiju'

on 30th Chaitra."

"On the day of first Baishakh they celebrate Boishu by venerating the gods, taking out colourful procession and holding traditional games and cultural programmes", he added.

People of Marma community celebrate Sangrai in three parts starting on the first day of Baishakh.

Basori Marma, women affairs secretary of Marma Unnayan Sangsad, Khagrachhari unit said, "The first day of the festival is called Sangrai, the second day is 'Sangrai Aika' and the third day is known as 'Sangrai Atada'".

On Sangrai, Marma people make traditional cake 'Sangraimul' and start the festivities by sending those to the saints at the Kyangs first, she said.

Pani Khela (splashing water on each other) is another popular part of the Sangrai. Young Marma men and women participate in the game and playfully douse each other with water.

It is believed by the Marma that with water they wash away all the woes, pains and sins of the past year. It also reinvigorates people for a good start, she said.

On the day of 'Sangrai Aika', Marma men and women participate in different kinds of traditional sports competition, hold in meeting with community personalities to discuss the social activities.

On the day of 'Sangrai Atada', a traditional food named 'Pagan', with more than a 100 vegetable ingredients, is cooked in every Marma house along with various cakes and other delicious items.

Sana Alam, chairman of Khagrachhari Sadar upazila said, "Boisabi is a symbol of communal harmony as the festival originating in the indigenous communities is now being celebrated by the local Bangalees with equal enthusiasm."



Hindu devotees have a holy dip, popularly known as Astami Snan, at Durga Sagar Dighi in Babuganj upazila of Barisal district yesterday. Such programmes were held in several other districts of the country.

PHOTO: STAR

B'baria Sadar Hospital docs, staff on strike

UNB, B'baria

Doctors and employees of Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital went on work abstention yesterday morning protesting attack on them on Saturday.

Dr. Abus Sayeed said that a gang entered the emergency unit of the hospital forcibly and attacked the on-duty doctors and employees and snatched away documents and a mobile phone set on Saturday.

A case was filed but none was arrested.

Sources said the work abstention will continue till today and if the culprits are not arrested by this time the doctors and staff will announce a tougher programme.

Meanwhile, patients coming from different areas of the district for treatment have been suffering a lot due to the work abstention.

Away in Patuakhali, a patient died allegedly without treatment at the town's general hospital.

Safia Begum, 35, of Kalagachia village

under Mirzagonj upazila who was admitted to the hospital died at about 8 am yesterday.

Relatives of the patient physically assaulted on-duty doctor Atiqur Rahman, medical officer (MO) of the hospital after the death of Safia, reports our correspondent.

Piara Islam, daughter of the patient said they took Safia to the diarrhoea ward at about 3 pm on Sunday.

After admission a nurse pushed a bag of saline. "Nurse or doctor none came to see my mother Ajmol, a nephew of my mother bought another bag of saline from outside and himself pushed it into his aunt's body," she said.

The medical officer came to the ward at about 8 am yesterday but by that time the patient passed away.

Contacted Dr Atiqur Rahman said, normally the on-duty nurses call a doctor if any patient's condition worsens. "But nobody called me to attend any patient", he said.

Sylhet traders block road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Businessmen here yesterday blocked Bandarbari main road to protest 'police excess' in the name of recovering stolen items from jewellery shops.

Later, they withdrew the hour-long blockade after getting the city mayor's assurance to resolve the matter.

Eye-witnesses said, two assistant sub-inspectors of Chhatak PS of Sunamganj district with the assistance of Kotwali PS came to the jewellery market in the city's Bandarbari area at about 12:30 pm yesterday.

The police team also brought two people accused in a theft case with them. The law enforcers then attempted to pick up Tarek,

son of Ali Akbar, owner of Shapla Jewellers on charge of buying some stolen ornaments from the two.

At a stage of heated exchange of words, the shop owner and staff of the neighbouring shops confined police to a shop. Shop owners and their staff from the neighbouring markets also joined the protest. The protesters blocked the main road in front of the market.

Sub-inspector Sohel Ahmed of Kotwali PS said the team went to the Shapla Jewellers for knowing whether they had purchased stolen gold ornaments from the two accused.

"But the businessmen misbehaved with the law enforcers. They even kept the police confined for more than an hour," he alleged.

An SOS for a primary school

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR
TOPU, Pabna

A shed made of corrugated iron sheets is all that houses Char Raninagar Registered Primary School in Pabna Sadar upazila.

"During the storm on April 4 afternoon, we ran for shelter, leaving our books, khatas (writing pads) and pens. Later when we came to

collect those, many of the materials were damaged," Md Idris Ali, a student of class four, said as this correspondent visited the school last week.

They are suffering such problems for the last three years.

Established at Modhyapara village in 1973, the school got registration as

Char Raninagar Registered Primary School in 1980. Funded by Local Government Engineering Department, two buildings of the school cum community centre were constructed at a cost of Tk 14.2 lakh in 1990.

After the Padma River devoured the concrete structures in 2007, authori-

ties made a tin-shed in a nearby area to continue schooling of the local children.

But the mighty river devoured the land in January this year and the school was shifted to 2.5 km away Char Raninagar Sardarpura where the school authority had bought 33 decimals of land.

"We have shifted our school to this land and erected a tin-shed with the help of villagers. But no wall could be set due to the lack of fund," said Md Mozahar Ali, headmaster of the school.

"We are yet to get any government help for reconstruction of the school although we submitted



Two teachers conduct separate classes under the same roof without any wall or partition as Char Raninagar Registered Primary School in Pabna Sadar upazila has remained in similar conditions since the Padma River devoured the concrete structures in 2007.

PHOTO: STAR

application to Pabna district administration, district board office, upazila chairman, upazila nirbahi officer and the primary education department," he said.

The 66-feet-long shed of the school is too small to accommodate 326 students of classes one to five while only three classes can be conducted at a time as there are only three teachers at the school, said Md Kamrul Hassan Eusuf, a teacher.

"Classes are often disturbed due to noise as there is no partition between

classes. There is no latrine, water source and other facilities here. Small children often rush to their houses to drink water," he said.

The president of the school managing committee, Md Badsha Sardar said that the local lawmaker assured them of trying his best to arrange government sanction for the school.

District Primary Education Officer Md Ekramul Haque said process is on to construct a building for the school.