

Jatka sells openly as fishermen defy ban

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

'Jatka' (hilsa less than 23-centimetre-long) has continued selling openly here although the seven-month country-wide ban on netting, transportation and marketing of the popular fish started on Thursday.

Aiming at development of *hilsa* resources in the country, authorities impose the ban from November 1 to May 31 every year.

But hard-pressed fishermen tend to defy the ban as only one-third fishermen of the division come under the purview of the fishery department's rehabilitation package, that too only for four months from February to May.

Fisheries department sources said they cannot take adequate action against *jatka* catchers and traders due to fund constraint, lack of manpower, loopholes in law and necessary logistic support.

"We have already formed mobile vigilance teams to monitor the situation. We will operate mobile courts to prevent catching and sale of *jatka*," said Bankim Chandra Mandal, assistant director of Barisal divisional



PHOTO: STAR

Although the authorities imposed a country-wide ban on netting and sale of hilsa fry, known as *jatka*, for seven months from November 1, a large number of fishermen tend to defy the ban.

fisheries office.

Barisal divisional fishery office sources said only 1,05,610 ultra poor and *hilsa* fishermen out of more than 3 lakh fishermen have been selected for February-May rehabilitation package.

They will receive monthly 30 kg of VGF rice per family and will be encouraged for 'alternative employment'.

On the other hand, Israil Pandit, president of

Bangladesh Khudra Matsyajibi Samiti, said sanctioning monthly 30 kg of rice per family only for one-third of the fishermen, that too for four months, virtually makes the 'rehabilitation programme' a farce. Poverty and unemployment will push poor fishermen in the southern districts to continue catching *jatka*, despite the seven-month annual

ban, he said.

The fishery officials claimed that steps taken by the government for imposing and monitoring year-wise ban on using thinly knitted current nets, November-May ban on *jatka* catching and marketing, March-April ban on *hilsa* fishing in four sanctuaries and September 25-October 5 ban on any kind of fishing in seven thousand kilometre area in the southern region, now contributing to the increase of *hilsa* fish in the country.

"Hilsa netting has doubled in last 14 years. Over 3.5 lakh tonnes of *hilsa* was caught this year whereas it was 1.47 lakh tonnes in 1998," said fisheries official Bankim Chandra.

If around 20 percent of the *jatka* can get the chance to reach maturity, it would add to over two lakh tonnes of *hilsa* worth hundreds of cores of taka every year, said fisheries officials.

A study of Fish Research Institute said the contribution of *hilsa* to the country's gross domestic product is two per cent and fishing sector provides about 9 to 12 per cent of the country's export earnings, he added.

Bangladeshi killed by compatriots in S Africa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Bangladeshi youth was killed in Bloemfontein town of South Africa on October 31 allegedly by three compatriots over business-related conflict.

The victim was identified as Abu Sayeed, son of Abu Naser of Yearpur village in Begumganj upazila of Noakhali.

The body of the deceased reached his village on Saturday night. Following his namaj-e-janaja, he was buried at his family graveyard yesterday morning.

Abu Naser, father of the victim, said Sayeed went to South Africa three years back. A year ago, he started a business with his cousin Yousufin Bloemfontein.

But before them, three brothers Solaiman, Masud and Hossain -- sons of Mofiz Mia of Debkala village of the same upazila -- were operating a similar business in the same town which triggered a conflict of interest among them.

At one stage, the trio demanded a big amount from Sayeed and realised Tk 2 lakh from him. But they later created pressure on Sayeed for more money, said Naser.

As Sayeed denied, they on October 31 hacked Sayeed with sharp weapons at Checkout Bangalee Restaurant, leaving him critically injured.

Locals rescued him and rushed him to a nearby hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared Sayeed dead.

Later, police recovered the body and sent it to Bangladesh after completing an autopsy.

A prompt, praiseworthy move saves Sandhya

Early marriage stopped, her schooling to go ahead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Class VIII student was saved from early marriage and her schooling was saved as well, thanks to the prompt intervention by the local upazila parishad chairman and the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

Sandhya Rani Roy, 13, daughter of Sumita Rani Roy and late Hapa Roy of Dublia Kalirbazar in Khansama upazila under Dinajpur, and a student of Hasimpur High School in the upazila, was preparing attending her Junior School Certificate (JSC) examination yesterday

morning.

But mysteriously Sumita Rani asked her daughter not to go to school.

As the girl protested it and starting shouting, the mother told her that she fixed her marriage with Sumanto Cgandra Roy, son of Atul Chandra Roy of Hralalpara village under the same upazila, and it would be held on November 16.

Hearing this, the girls broke into tears.

Nazma Akter, a local girl, informed the chairman of Khansama Upazila Parishad of the matter and

the latter immediately informed ATM Ziaul Islam, the UNO.

The UNO promptly came to Sandhya Rani's residence and persuaded her mother to refrain from the decision to marry off the girl until she reaches marriageable age. Afterwards, the mother allowed her daughter to attend the JSC examinations that started across the country yesterday.

"I am happy as the problem was solved within a short time," said the girl while talking with this correspondent over phone.



PHOTO: STAR

Class VIII students across the country took part in the Junior School Certificate examinations that started yesterday. The photo was taken from a centre in Rajshahi.

SAD DEATH OF A DOLPHIN



PHOTO: STAR

A dolphin met a sad death in the Bhairab River yesterday. Police said local fisherman Ranjit Biswas who was fishing in Harikhali area of the river at night found the Gangetic river dolphin caught in his net. When the dolphin died after some-time, he brought the marine mammal to the riverbank with the help of his fellow fishermen in the morning and left it on a road in Muniganj area. Divisional Forest Officer (East Zone) of the Sundarbans M Ameer Hossain Chowdhury said the dolphin was around nine feet in length weighing several maunds. It was later buried under the earth, he said.

Trauma centre limps for want of staffs, logistics

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Accident victims are deprived of proper treatment as the three-storied trauma centre on the premises of Tangail General Hospital has not been made functional during the last one year and a half years due to lack of manpower and logistics.

With increase of vehicular movement after construction of the Bangabandhu Bridge, Tangail district saw more frequent road accidents and the need for a trauma centre was felt all the more.

The health directorate decided to construct the trauma centre and work for its construction started in 2008-2009 fiscal year, said sources at Tangail Civil Surgeon's Office.

After constructing the trauma centre at a cost of Tk 3 crore 22 lakh 56 thousand, Public Works Department in Tangail handed it over the Directorate of Health on June 2 last year.

But despite having all infrastructures including an emergency ward, an operation theatre, a pathological laboratory and a 20-bed ward, the trauma centre could not start functioning during the last 18 months as no posts of physicians,

nurses and technicians have been created for the purpose, sources in the health directorate said.

During a visit a couple of days ago, this correspondent found the main gate of the trauma centre locked while the floor inside remained covered with dust.

Accident victims including the critically injured ones have to be kept on the floor and at the veranda of the 250-bed Tangail General Hospital as there is lack of sufficient beds, said several physicians of the hospital.

The problem mounts when quite a few accident victims are brought to the hospital at a time, they

added.

Contacted, Tangail Civil Surgeon Mohammad Nazrul Islam said, "On several occasions, letters were sent to the Directorate of Health to make the trauma centre functional. We also sent a proposal to start treatment at the centre by bringing manpower including physicians from the local level on deputation. But the proposal was not approved."

Making the trauma centre functional is urgently needed in the accident prone Tangail district, said Dr Shahidullah Kaiser, general secretary of Tangail district unit of Bangladesh Medical Association.



PHOTO: STAR

This impressive building of Trauma Centre on the premises of Tangail General Hospital is yet to start functioning, one and a half years after completion of its construction, due to lack of manpower and logistics.

Schoolgirl burnt in acid attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A schoolgirl received serious burn injuries as criminals hurled acid at her at Phulbari village in Chatmohar upazila of the district early yesterday.

The victim, Reshmi Khatun, 12, is a class five student of Kalampur Government Primary School under DB Gram union of the upazila.

Reshmi's father Md Idris Ali told this correspondent that unidentified criminals threw acid on his daughter through the window while she was asleep in a room of their house at around 1:30am.

She received burn injuries in her face, hands and other parts of the body, he added.

Reshmi is now undergoing treatment at Pabna Medical College Hospital. Her mother Romesa Khatun said they have a feud with Md Shahjahan Ali of the same village over the ownership of a land. But she could not confirm his involvement in the attack.

Idris Ali yesterday filed a case with Chatmohar Police Station, naming none as accused. He demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits.

Chatmohar police said they have launched a drive to arrest the culprits.

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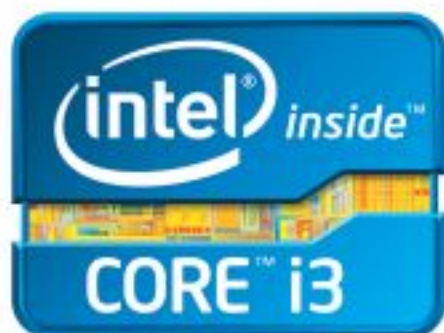
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