

Poor catches of hilsa in peak season frustrate fishermen

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Despite being the peak season of hilsa, fishermen are getting frustrated due to poor catches of the popular fish in the coastal rivers.

Meanwhile, the prices of the fish have gone beyond purchasing capability of the common people due to its poor netting, report correspondents.

Belayet Hossain Gazi, a hilsa catcher of Char Hadi area under Dashmina upazila of Patuakhali district said he sold a hilsa at Tk 700 which he netted after four days of fishing in the Tentulia River yesterday.

We are passing hard days with my family of five due to

poor hilsa netting, he said.

After the 8-month long ban on jakta netting was withdrawn on June 30, we started fishing but got no hilsa in the river, he said.

Abdur Rahman, another fisherman of the same area, said he was very frustrated as no hilsa was found at the peak season. Heavy rainfall is favourable for hilsa netting but in vain, he added.

Md. Alamgir Hossain, a fisherman of Char Wadel under Bauful upazila, said that he caught only two hilsa in the last 10 days.

Siraj Majhi, a fisherman, arranged a doa mehfil on his fishing boat near his house at Char Wadel yesterday to pray to the Almighty for

getting hilsa in the river.

"I passed 12 days on the river for hilsa but in vain," he said.

Masum Bepari, a fish trader at Mohipur landing station in Kalapara, said hilsa might have changed their courses due to ecological changes in the Bay and its adjacent rivers.

Md. Lokman Ali, chairman for Aqua Culture Department at Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU), said the main reason of hilsa crisis is the climate change.

Government should take some urgent steps in this regard such as dredging of different rivers where hilsa remains for full season.

Besides, industrial waste dumping must be stopped, he said.

Talking to the UNB, a number of fishermen in Khulna said hilsa is not being netted in good quantity in the coastal rivers as the fish is not much available there.

Sources said this time last year, some 20 to 30 trawlers loaded with hilsa came to KB Fish Landing Station, main hilsa selling centre of Bagerhat, every day.

But the picture is quite different this season due to poor catching of the fish.

Lulu Mollah, a trader at the fish landing station on the town protection embankment, said they are

now getting only one to two maunds of hilsa against the daily demand of 500 maunds.

He added that the netted hilsa are also not good in size.

Sheikh Idris Ali, president of Upakulio Matsyajibi Samity, said fishermen are now facing financial hardship due to poor hilsa catches.

He said during this period in previous years, four to five truckloads of hilsa were sent to Jessore, Magura, Faridpur, Khulna, Rajshahi, Kaliganj, Jhenaidah and Kushtia from the fish landing station, adding that due to scanty supply, the fish can not be sent to the districts this year.

Besides, the fish export to India from the landing station has registered a fall this year compared to the last year's for the same reason, said the fish trader.

While visiting the main fish markets in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira, this UNB correspondent found hilsa traders passing very idle time.

Another fish trader Arup Kumar said the market price of hilsa is three times higher this year compared to the last year's.

The biggest size hilsa fish weighing more than one kg each sells at Tk 45,000-50,000 per maund while those were sold at between Tk 35,000 and 40,000 last year.

Small size hilsa fish equivalent to 700 grams sells at Tk 35,000 per maund while it was between Tk 15,000-20,000 last year, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

People wade through knee-deep water on Golapjan Road in Mymensingh town as the place, like many other areas of the district headquarters, got flooded only after a moderate rainfall yesterday, revealing poor drainage system in the municipality area.

Heavy rain triggers flash floods in Sunamganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Heavy rain coupled with onrush of hillwater has triggered flash flood in vast areas of Sunamganj including the district headquarters.

Flood Control Cell of Sunamganj WDB said the Surma was flowing 57cm above the danger level near the district yesterday.

Floodwater engulfed low-lying areas of the district town and Sadar and Tahirpur upazilas, rendering 500 families marooned.

Besides, three other upazilas- Biswambharpur, Doarabazaar and Jamalganj- were hit five days ago.

A big portion of Sunamganj, including Barapara, Pashchim Bazaar, Maachh Bazaar, Shologhar and Nabinagar under Sadar Upazila, Nowapara, Mohabbatpur, Chokbazaar, Payekpara, Lakhipur, Kushiura and Voktarpur under Doarabazaar Upazila and Maharam, Lakmar, Lamakata under Tahirpur, two villages in Biswambharpur Upazila went under water as the rain continued, they added.

Abdul Alim, 58, of Lakhipur village in Duarabazaar upazila, said the flood was triggered by heavy rain in the last two days.

"Water from Surma started to enter our home since Saturday evening", he said.

Saud Ahmed, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Sunamganj, said water level at different points of the Surma would cross the danger level within 72 hours if the rain continues. He said floodwater submerged around 25 villages in the district.

Debojit Singha, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Sunamganj, said they informed the higher authorities about the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

Although the ongoing peak season sees serious crisis of hilsa in the southern region, hard-pressed fishermen on small boats continue efforts to catch the popular fish. The photo was taken from Tentulia River in Bauful upazila under Patuakhali district yesterday.

SNIPPETS

25 trafficked kids brought back

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) handed over 25 Bangladeshi children, who were trafficked to India three years ago, to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on Tuesday night. Nayek Subedar Hafizur Rahman, in-charge of BGB Benapole outpost said Indian police rounded up the children soon after they were taken to the neighbouring country about three years back. They languished in different Indian jails, till a human rights organisation rescued them and took them to its own shelter home and informed Bangladesh Woman Lawyers Association (BWLA). BWLA took the initiative to bring them back home.

Death in custody, 5 cops sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Four policemen of Dasar Police Station under the district have been sued for the death of a youth in custody. The accused are Officer-in-Charge Emdadul Haque, Sub-Inspector Mir Nazmul Hasan, and constables Forhad Hossain and Salauddin. Reba Begum, mother of the victim, Shahin Mollah, filed a case with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, Madaripur, on Tuesday afternoon. In the case statement, she stated that a team of police led by Sub-Inspector Mir Nazmul Hasan, detained Shahin from Dasar-Medakul bridge area on June 8 and tortured him. Shahin fell sick and died on the way to hospital, she said in the statement. The court took the case into cognisance and asked the director of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-8 to submit a report to the court after proper investigation into the incident.

Alleged killer of Farhad held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police on Tuesday night arrested a man in Chhotapir area of the city for his alleged involvement with the killing of Farhad Hossain. The arrestee was identified as Ashraf Ali, of the area. Police also recovered a bloodstained knife from his possession. Criminals stabbed to death Farhad Hossain, who was an accused in Jubo Dal leader Mosharraf Hossain Padmo murder case, in Satgara-Mistripara area in Rangpur city on Monday night.

Worker electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A construction worker was electrocuted in Dapdapia area of the city yesterday noon. The victim was identified as Mahtab Hasan, 35, a resident of Rupertoli area in ward No 24 under Barisal City Corporation. Kotwali police said Mahtab was working at an under construction building in the area. Suddenly, he came in contact with a live electric wire and died instantly.

Rickshaw-puller murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Criminals stabbed the puller of a battery-run rickshaw to death in Chandanaish upazila of the district on Tuesday night. The deceased is Abdus Sobhan, 50, of South Cachbaria village in the same upazila. SM Bodiuazzaman, officer in-charge of Chandanaish Police Station, said locals found Sobhan with severe injuries in his head in Boinnapukurpar area around 9:30pm and rushed him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead around 11:00pm.

No trace of LGED staff abducted a year ago

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Md Maidul Islam, accounts assistant of Patuakhali Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) office, has remained traceless since his abduction on June 26 last year.

Abu Hanif, then a cook of Patuakhali Circuit House, took Tk 3.75 lakh from Maidul, giving assurance to give his wife Rima Khatun job at Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner's office, said Rima Khatun.

"Hanif put signature on a blank bank cheque and judicial stamps, and handed those over to my husband Maidul, saying that Maidul would get back the money, drawing it from the bank, if Hanif fails to give the job," she said.

"On June 16, 2013, Hanif was transferred to Dashmina upazila from Patuakhali and it became apparent that he would not be able to give me the job. Afterwards, Maidul several times asked Hanif to return the money.

"At about 4:00pm on

June 26, Hanif called Maidul over mobile phone to come to Circuit House with the cheque and stamps. Accordingly, Maidul left his house of Kalatala in



Md Maidul Islam

Patuakhali town with the cheque and stamps and since then he has remained missing," Rima Khatun said.

Rima filed a general diary with Patuakhali Police Station in this connection on July 3 and police filed an abduction case on July 9 over the matter.

Later police arrested Hanif and his aides Sohel and Shamim for their alleged involvement in the incident. Police also seized Maidul's cell phone from

Sohel. Hanif and Sohel made confessional statements to police that they physically tortured Maidul to take back the cheque and stamps, confining him to a room at the Circuit House.

They also made Maidul write on a white paper that he got the money back from Hanif. Later they handed over Maidul to a man.

One year into the incident, the man who brought Maidul from the Circuit House is yet to be arrested.

"I want to see my husband. Please help me," a tearful Rima Khatun, holding her two and a half year old daughter Medha, told journalists.

Investigation officer of the case, Sub Inspector Md Mehedi Hasan said, "We are trying our best to rescue Maidul. All the arrestees are now in jail."

Superintendent of Police Rafiqul Hasan Gani said they have plans to send the case to the Criminal Investigation Department soon for further investiga-

BCL at IU besieges VC office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists at Islamic University unit yesterday besieged the vice-chancellor's office for two hours, protesting a syndicate meeting scheduled to be held on July 11 over the recruitment of some class one, three and four employees.

Sources said BCL had submitted their candidates list to the IU authorities and were putting pressure to recruit accordingly.

The BCL men want the authorities to approve and recruit their candidates through the syndicate meeting on July 11.

A group of BCL activists, led by Shamim Ahmed, convener of IU unit, went to the administrative building around 2:30pm yesterday and chanted slogans against Abdul Hakim, vice-chancellor of the university, for fixing the syndicate meeting without considering their demands.

They also blocked the university main gate and stopped plying of university transports.

Later, following the assurances of the authorities, the BCL men called off their agitation around 4:30pm and left the administrative building.

Docs at Khulna hospitals postpone strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Medical practitioners at both public and private hospitals in the district on Tuesday night postponed their indefinite strike for a week following a meeting with the local administration.

Leaders of Khulna unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association (BPMMA), Bangladesh Private Clinic and Diagnostics Owners Association (BPCDOA), lawmaker of Khulna-2 constituency Mizanur Rahman Mizan, administrator of Khulna District Council Sheikh Harun-ur-Rashid, among others, were present at the meeting.

The strike was withdrawn following an assurance by the MP of looking into the matter and taking steps to resolve the problems, said Dr Sheikh Baharul Alam, vice-president of Khulna chapter of BMA.

On Monday, the medical practitioners called the strike to press their three-point demands-- arrest and exemplary punishment of the Khulna University students involved in Dr

Tanvir Ahmed Bappa abduction incident, investigation into the attack on some employees of Gazi Medical College Hospital, and ensuring security of doctors and employees at all government and private hospitals.

On the night of July 2, some students of Khulna University vandalised windowpanes, glasses, doors and valuable medical equipments of GMCH and abducted duty doctor Tanvir, claiming that the medical authorities failed to ensure better treatment for Amit Roy, a first year student of the university.

Police, however, rescued Tanvir from a hotel near the KU campus the next morning.

Amit, who was injured in a road crash, was rushed to KMCH. He was later shifted to GMCH. He succumbed to his injuries around 11:30pm on Wednesday while being taken to Dhaka for better treatment.

"We will observe 48-hour strike from July 16 if the attackers and abductors of doctor Tanvir Islam Bappa were not arrested before July 15", said Dr Sheikh Baharul Alam.

He also threatened to go for tougher movement if their demands were not

BCL assaults headmaster for not bowing to demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A BCL leader and his aides assaulted the headmaster of a local high school on Tuesday, allegedly for not giving him permission to hold a week-long furniture fair at the school ground at Birunia Bazar in Bhaluka upazila.

He also threatened Md Helal Uddin, headmaster of Kongshekul High School, of dire consequences if he filed any case regarding the incident.

The BCL men had been trying to get the permission for the last couple of days, but the school authorities said they could not allow it as the construction work of a school building was going on there.

Sources said a gang of 40 to 50 BCL men, led by Sarwar Jahan, nephew of local Awami League lawmaker and Maidul Islam, president of Birunia Union unit of BCL entered the headmaster's room around 11:30am

and asked him to issue a permission for holding the furniture fair at the school field.

As Helal Uddin refused to do so, Sarwar, Maidul, Lorence, Anarul and Bubul among the 40 to 50 BCL men beat him up and took him to Birunia Bazar area for further harassment. Hearing Helal's hew and cry, locals rushed in and rescued him from the clutches of the attackers and admitted him to Bhaluka Upazila Health Complex.

Several locals told this correspondent that marking the 'Urs' of Muskhi Darbar Sharif in adjacent Gafargaon upazila, gambling is organised in the name of furniture fair at Birunia every year. Local political leaders, police and other local influential earn a handsome amount of money from the fair, they said.

Condemning the attack, they also demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.

Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge of Bhaluka Police Station, said they will take legal steps once



PHOTO: STAR

RISKY TRIP ON TURBULENT RIVER: A small launch carrying passengers from Kachchapia Ghat to Dhalchar in Charfashion upazila under Bhola district crosses the mighty Meghna, although authorities banned plying of small vessels in the area declared as 'danger zone' from March 15 to October 15.