



Fishermen pass their time mending nets and looking after fishing boats as they are mostly free during the ongoing ban period of catching hilsa. The photo was taken from Mohipur fish landing station in Patuakhali district.

BAN ON NETTING HILSA Patuakhali, Barguna fishermen yet to get food support

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Fishermen of coastal districts Patuakhali and Barguna have not got benefit under the government's food support programme as the list of beneficiaries has not been prepared till now. The first phase of distribution of food grains was scheduled to start in March.

Meanwhile, about 55 percent of the registered fishermen of these two districts are outside the coverage of the food programme.

"The number of beneficiaries has already been fixed, though the list for distribution of rice among fishermen under the programme has not been prepared yet," said Md Azaharul Islam, acting district fisheries officer of Patuakhali.

Fisheries department sources said there are 84,718 registered fishermen in Patuakhali and Barguna districts, of whom 46,098 are in Patuakhali and 38,620 are in Barguna. Among them, 38,923 fishermen have been brought under the programme, of whom 25,173 are in Patuakhali and 13,750 in

Barguna.

64.40 percent of the fishermen in Patuakhali and 45.40 percent in Barguna are out of the food support programme.

The government undertook a food support programme for the fishermen, especially hilsa fishermen, as subsidy during the hilsa ban period. According to the plan, each listed fisherman would get 40 kg of rice for four months from March to June this year.

According to government instructions, the first phase of food support was to be distributed by March 15. After finalising the list with the local union parishad, the food department gave allocation for two months, March and April, to the fisheries offices.

The government took the decision to mitigate the sufferings of the fishermen who cannot catch fish for eight months from November to June every year.

Md Harun Fakir, a fisherman of Tatulbaria village of Nishanbaria union under Taltali upazila in Barguna district said, "Fishing is my

only profession and I have to maintain a family of six, but now I am passing hard times as I couldn't catch fish since November.

Till now I have not got food support from the fisheries office though I learnt I will get 40 kg of rice for each month. I can't support my family as there is no alternative job."

"I couldn't pay tuition fees of my daughter who is studying in Taltali College as I have no job," said another fisherman, Abdul Bareq, of the same area.

Like Harun Fakir and Abdul Bareq many in the area are passing hard days as they have not got food support though March has already passed and April is about to end.

Md. Alauddin Paltu, UP chairman of Kakchira Union Parishad under Taltali upazila said, "I didn't prepare the list of fishermen for the food support programme as members didn't submit their list to my office although I asked them to do so by March 15."

Ranjit Kumer Sarker, Project Implementation Officer (PIO) of

Barguna Sadar upazila said, "We already got allocation from food office but we couldn't distribute it as the list has not been submitted to our office."

Alfaj Uddin Shaikh, Barguna Sadar upazila fisheries officer, said 3,894 out of 6,613 registered fishermen were brought under the food support programme. "We will distribute rice among them after getting the list from UP chairmen," he said.

Bankim Chandra Biswas, Barguna district fisheries officer, said 13,750 out of 38,620 fishermen in the district were brought under food support programme. "We will start distribution after getting the list from UP chairmen through upazila parishads," he said.

When contacted, Md Azaharul Islam, acting district fisheries officer in Patuakhali, said 25,173 out of 46,098 fishermen would be brought under food support in the district, which would be distributed after getting the list from the union parishads through all eight upazila parishads.

Banker commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A banker allegedly committed suicide at his house in Sahibagh area of Srimangal upazila town yesterday morning.

The deceased is Jahir Uddin Akon, 45, manger of Uttara Bank, Srimangal upazila branch, and a resident of the area.

AKM Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Srimangal Police Station, said Jahir took his life by hanging himself from the ceiling of this room at around 8:00am.



Slices of potato are kept for drying in the sun, as preparation to make chips, at Srikishnapur village in Akkelpur upazila under Joypurhat district.

Potato chip making brings them solvency

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Around 300 families of Srikishnapur village in Akkelpur upazila of Joypurhat district earned prosperity by producing potato chips on commercial basis.

"After producing chips, we supply it to different companies in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and other areas of the country," said Taiful Islam of the village, nearly 20 kilometres from Joypurhat district town.

A small number of villagers started doing the work five years ago and later the profitable job attracted more and more people.

During a recent visit to the village, this correspondent found family members including men, women and children busy in the work -- some of them collecting and sorting potatoes and others boiling it as preparation to

make chips.

"Usually we collect potatoes from March to June to make chips round the year. Women make paste from the boiled potatoes, slice it and dry in the sun," said Akram Hossain, a resident of the village.

"We can make 40 kg of chips from 200 kg of potatoes. The processing needs 10 days and cost us Tk 4,000 to 5,000. After selling it we can earn Tk 1600 to 1700," said Shahidul Islam of the village.

The locals have urged the government to arrange soft loan to help expansion of the business.

Potato chip making has changed the life of a good number of people and helped empowerment of rural women in the area, said AZM Sabbir Ibne Jahan, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, Joypurhat.

DOUBLE MURDER AT HSTU Pro-ruling party men, students, teachers sued in another case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Another case has been filed in connection with the April 16 murder of two students of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) at the campus.

Golam Mostafa, father of Md Zakaria, one of the two victims, filed the case with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Dinajpur on Tuesday afternoon, accusing 38 named people including Abu Ibne Razob, president of Dinajpur district unit of Swachhchasebak League, several BCL activists and HSTU students, and three HSTU teachers including Proctor ATM Shafiqul Islam.

Nazmul Hossain, judge of the court, ordered police to file their report with that of an earlier case filed on April 21.

"The accused led by Abu Ibne Razob entered the HSTU campus on April 16 night to prevent a demonstration of an anti vice chancellor movement led by BCL HSTU unit leaders Iftekharul Islam Real and Arun Kanti Roy. In a planned way, they attacked Md Zakaria and Mahmudul Hasan Milton and stabbed them to death," Golam Mostafa mentioned in his case.

On April 21, family members of Mahmudul Hasan Milton filed a murder case with the court, accusing 42 people including ruling party activists, the HSTU vice chancellor and the proctor.

On April 22, Proctor ATM Shafiqul Islam filed a case with Dinajpur Police Station, accusing 37 people including Iftekharul Islam Real and Arun Kanti Roy, HSTU unit president and secretary of BCL respectively, in connection with the murder of two HSTU students.

The three cases filed in connection with the HSTU double murder incident will be merged together, police said.

Meanwhile, Razob said implicating him in Tuesday's case was a politically motivated act.

HSTU students Md Zakaria and Mahmudul Hasan Milton were killed during a factional clash of BCL at the university on April 16.



A heavily loaded truck got stuck on this Bailey bridge over the Jamuneshwari River at Hortukitola village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila after its wheels slipped into the gap of displaced steel plates on the deck on Monday, snapping direct vehicular movement on Nilphamari-Panchagarh road. The bridge remains highly vulnerable as activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir caused serious damage to the structure during their violent political agitation on December 12 in 2013 but the Roads and Highways Department did only a few temporary repairs since then.

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