Fest of fish

Three-day fair attracts crowd in Moulvibazar, sees huge sale

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

It is not the usual fair where you will find clothes, potteries and handicrafts. It is a fish fair, which is rarely seen these days.

We are talking about the traditional fish fair in Sherpur of Moulvibazar Sadar upazila.

Much to the delight of the fish lovers, this is a fair which exhibits and sells various kinds of freshwater fish at a time when it is difficult to find them in the haors, beels and rivers.

Every year, the fair begins in the afternoon of the day before Poush Sangkranti on the bank of the

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A fish fair in Sherpur area of Moulvibazar Sadar upazila yesterday.

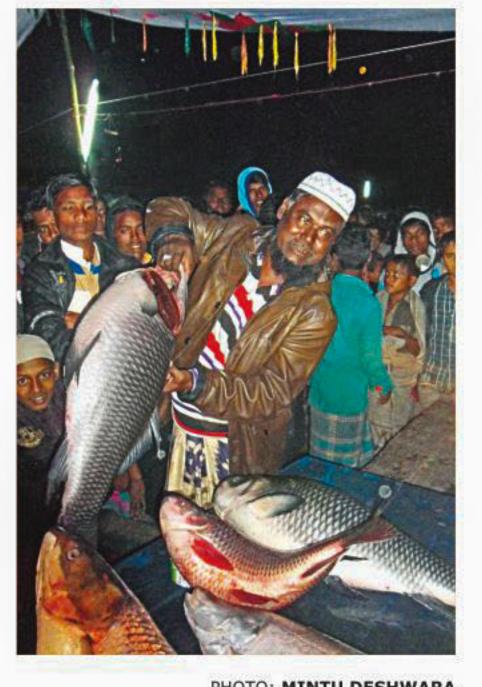


PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Shakib, Mushy roar like never before

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Both batsmen will have their names in the honours board at the visiting team's dressing room and the partnership will have a long-lasting impact on a few hundred fans in attendance.

And for those who missed it, the partnership and the records along the way deserve detailed description.

Bangladesh resumed the day on 154 for three and Mominul got out without adding a single run to his overnight score of 64 in the fourth over. It was a brilliant delivery from Tim Southee, the ball angled in and Mominul had to play at it. The ball took the edge of his bat on way to the waiting gloves of BJ Watling.

It brought Mushfigur to the wicket and he was playing his first game after recovering from a hamstring injury that he sustained in the opening ODI at Christchurch on December 26. Shakib greeted him with a custom-

ary fist-punch and the old guard started their association from 160 for four. They took the score past the 200mark in the 14th over of the day. New Zealand bowlers were coming hard knowing that this was the last recognised pair.

Neil Wagner bowled six bouncers on the trot and Shakib ducked each one of them and that was good news for his team because he was fully focused after being dropped at four

late on the first day.

Mushfigur started uncertainly, slashing Grandhomme well outside the off-stump. He was lucky as the ball flew over the gully fielder for four and with it came the 50-run partnership.

They went into the first drinks break at 210 for four in 50 overs and when they returned Shakib accelerated, hitting Southee for a four through the covers, a couple off the next delivery and then a single to move on to 46. The left-hander brought up his fifty off 86 balls in some style, hitting Southee straight down the ground. The New Zealand captain introduced his lone spinner Mitchell Santner in the 69th over to break the partnership. But it grew from strength to strength. Mushfigur completed his fifty with a sweep off Santner for a four.

Shakib brought up the 100-run partnership with an unconvincing slash between slip and gully but went for a satisfying lunch, adding 115 runs against one wicket. The second newball was taken in the fifth over after lunch but by that time Shakib had become the third Bangladeshi after Tamim Iqbal and Habibul Bashar to go past 3,000 Test runs when he took a single and reached 71.

The new ball did little to rattle the pair expect for a few fiery overs from Trent Boult, who troubled both batsmen with those incoming thunder-

bolts. But anything over-pitched or outside off-stump was duly punished. Shakib slashed one over gully and the Bangladesh total reached 303 in 83.1

Shakib, on 87, seemed to have been caught down the leg side. Southee thought it brushed off his gloves and asked for a review but was overturned by the third umpire as replays showed that the ball missed bat and glove and brushed the thigh pad. Shakib moved on to the 90s with a sweetly-timed four through the covers and then took little time to complete his fourth Test hundred after the post-lunch drinks break. On 93, he struck Neil Wagner for four through extra-cover, ran for two and then flicked for a single and celebrated the landmark in subdued fashion.

After hitting two boundaries Mushfigur also moved closer to his for fourth hundred. After playing a few dot balls, he reached the landmark when he tried to leave but the ball ran off the bat face and slipped through second slip and gully for four. The pair went for a satisfying tea with Bangladesh going strong at 391 for four in 101

There was an interesting change in the field settings from the morning session to the post tea session. The Black Caps started with four slips, a gully and a point in the morning and by the time pair walloped their way to

the post-tea session, all the slip fielders were removed, understandably as a contingency plan for damage limita-On 137 Shakib was adjudged

caught behind off Wagner. But after it

was referred to the third umpire just to

confirm whether Watling had taken

the catch cleanly, replays showed that the ball touched the ground from the impact of Watling's dive. After surviving that close call, Shakib crossed the 150-mark with a sweep for a couple. By that time he played 191 balls and hit 22 boundaries. The partnership crossed 300 when Mushfigur stepped out against

Santner for a classic cover drive for The Bangladesh captain then charged down the wicket against his New Zealand counterpart Kane Williamson for a mighty six over longon, which was incidentally only the second six of the innings. With this six the fifth wicket stand crossed the previous best Bangladeshi stand for any wicket -- 312 by Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes against Pakistan at home

in April 2015. Mushfiqur, the first Bangladesh batsman to score a double hundred, reached 150 with a single. However in the hunt for a double hundred Shakib gave it a real push, mercilessly hitting anything wide outside the off stump. A delicate late cut against Santner, followed by a savage pull off Boult took Shakib to 189. He was dropped at backward point by Ross Taylor on 189 while playing his favourite cut shot. Bangladesh crossed their highest score against New Zealand when the pair took the total to 503 for four. Shakib then gave the final push for his double hundred, driving Boult through the covers for a boundary followed by a single and a couple in the same over.

With Shakib on 199, New Zealand captain Williamson brought all his fielders inside the circle. The champion left-hander, after playing six dot balls, reached the milestone with his pet shot -- a back-foot cut off Gandhomme. And the moment the ball beat the circle, the knowledgeable audience stood up and saluted his marvellous innings. The applause went on for a while and the Bangladesh dressing room was full of

The partnership was finally broken when Mushfiqur drove a full delivery behind the wicket for 159 off 200 balls that contained 23 fours and a six. Shakib got out at 217, dragging an attempted chop on to his stumps. But by that time he had replaced his longtime friend and teammate Tamim to own the highest individual Test score for Bangladesh.

Struggling

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services department has attracted 19 participants in the IT stream and 31 for sewing. Many of its participants who arrive enthusiastically in class each day are women. Along with training, students are offered tiffin and lunch, as well as Tk 300 per day allowance to help with daily expenses.

"In the classroom, there is no difference between Dalit learners and mainstream students," says one of the programme's trainers, Mizanur Rahman. "They are equally curious to learn."

He notes that students in the sewing stream will receive a sewing machine with their certificate at the end of the course in mid-November.

Officials of social services department said each participant was given a sewing machine. "The computer training programme

in particular can help our youth to get jobs," says Lalit Das of the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Communities' Rights Movement.

He hopes other measures to overcome centuries of discrimination will also be taken, including pursuing quota systems in key areas of public life including jobs, education, health and housing; as well as implementing effective social protection and safety net schemes. The Movement has called for the formation of a Dalit Commission to ensure rights, and for caste-based discrimination to be legally recognised as a punishable

offence. "There are around 2,80,000 members of the Dalit and other excluded communities residing in the district," says the assistant director at the Barisal office of the social services department, AKM Aktaruzzaman Talukder. "In addition to the current programme we have distributed an allowance of Tk 400 to 644 people and education grants of up to Tk 300 for 375 students in efforts to help these communities As for the training programme, if it is able to assist the participants in building better futures, it will have been a success."

With the programme ending in November, many students find themselves wanting more. "We are really happy with the computer programme," says Sangita Das, 25, from Katpatty area of the city. "Now we hope our training can be extended to improve our skills further, which would be an even greater help."

Coal danger for Sundarbans

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not be damaging for the Sundarbans. As it is near the "Swatch of No Ground", the toxic material could reach there during the low tide, he said.

The "Swatch of No Ground", a submarine canyon in the Bay and known as a hotspot for cetaceans and other aquatic species, has been declared Bangladesh's first "marine protected area".

It is the fourth vessel to sink in or around the Sundarbans since December 9, 2014 when an oil tanker carrying 3.57 lakh litres of furnace oil sank in the Shela

"If the authorities want to transport coal for the operation of Rampal power plant, the way it is being done now, it would be disastrous for the Sundarbans," said Zahir Uddin, conservator of the forest, Khulna division.

Such accidents are happening one after another as the ministry of shipping has been allowing faulty vessels to operate here, he said. If the government does not take necessary measures, the Sundarbans will be always under

As per the environment impact assessment of the Rampal project, mother vessels will bring 80,000 tonnes of coal and offload it at Akram Point off the Sundarbans and later lighterage vessels would bring the coal through the Pasur

material which could be used to black-

mail him "phony allegations" and said

they had been put together by "political

opponents and a failed spy afraid of

by sleazebag political operatives, both

Democrats and Republicans - FAKE

"Probably released by "Intelligence"

even knowing there is no proof, and

never will be. My people will have a full

He then turned his attention to

Democrat candidate Hillary Clinton,

who was beaten in the November elec-

tion, saying she had "no enthusiasm"

and had "campaigned in the wrong

The incoming president has vehe-

report on hacking within 90 days!"

NEWS! Russia says nothing exists.

He continued: "Totally made up facts

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being sued".

states".

river to Rampal "controlling" dust.

Every day, the plant will require 10,000 tonnes of coal, which means several vessels will operate along the Pasur through the forest.

Md Waliullah, the harbour master of

the Mongla port, said the sinking of MV Aichgati was not causing any trouble for regular operation of vessels through the Zulfikar channel.

"The sea remains choppy where the incident took place. So it is very hard to locate the sunken vessels," he said.

The port authorities had asked the Noapara traders to take necessary steps to spot and salvage the vessel, he added.

MV Aichgati, loaded with coal from mother vessel, sank while crossing the estuary because cracks reportedly developed on its bottom.

Businessman HM Dulal of Mongla port said that Noapara Traders, a business entity from Noapara in Jessore, imported total 48,000 tonnes of coal from South Africa. MV Lady Marry, an Indonesian ship, brought this coal and anchored near buoy 12 at the outer anchorage of Mongla port.

Unloading of coal began two days ago. Loaded with 1,010 tonnes of coal on the MV Aichgati on Thursday night, Aichgati started for Noapara around

8:00am yesterday. But, he added, it sank around 9:30am Sundarbans," he said.

because cracks developed in its bottom when it reached near the fairway buoy number seven. Then a vessel carrying fly ash rescued the crew.

Lt Commander Rahatuzzaman told The Daily Star that two patrol teams were dispatched to verify the news around 11:30am.

Previously, three vessels sank in the Sundarbans, drawing criticism and raising alarm over the safety of the world

On December 9, 2014, an oil tanker sank and spilt oil spread to the far corners of the forest with the stream of the Shela river. Plants and wildlife were seriously affected.

A vessel carrying fertiliser sank in the Pasur on October 28, 2015 and another

Professor Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee for the Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port, said any sensible government should take this

Big pledges remain largely ignored

FROM PAGE 1 political parties, professional bodies and civil societies. But in the last three years, it did not make any move to this

Instead, on many occasions, the government high-ups blasted civil society personalities for their criticism of government activities.

The government has also refused to restore the provisions of the 1972 con-

Worldwide, it has long been settled that without effective independence of judiciary, a democracy cannot function properly. But in Bangladesh, things are different.

The AL-led government pledged to strengthen its efforts to establish rule of law and protect human rights. But alarming incidents of extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances portray a sorry state of the rule of law and human rights.

It has made no move to appoint an ombudsman in line with the constitutional provision to ensure good governance. Its pledge remains only in paper. The AL before the December 2008 election had also pledged to appoint an ombudsman.

in the last three years to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission, another diversion from its pledges.

The electoral democracy has suffered the most in the last three years though the AL pledged to strengthen the electoral system.

2014, parliamentary election. In that election held amid a boycott

by the BNP-led alliance, the AL easily won three-fourth majority in parliament. Moreover, 153 out of the 300 MPs were elected uncontested, denying people's voting rights. In the elections to remaining 147 constituencies, voter turnout was low. Electoral irregularities like ballot

stuffing and fake voting returned in the last parliamentary polls after five years. tions held in the last three years.

The electoral anomalies dominated almost all the local government elec-After the first year in office, the AL had to face widespread street violence for the first three months of 2015. The BNP-led alliance enforced countrywide non-stop blockade from January 6,

Widespread violence erupted across the country lasting for around three months during the blockade coupled with frequent hartals. More than 100 people were either killed or burnt alive in firebomb attacks on vehicles.

The law enforcement agencies took

stern actions against the opposition

alliance's leaders and activists. The movement failed to oust the govern-Since then, the BNP remains in disarray. Outside of parliament, the AL and the government now appear unchal-

lengeable. The law enforcement agencies, however, were tough against dissenting

The Democratic Left Alliance leaders and activists who have been protesting the construction of a coal-based power plant in the Sundarbans area faced

police actions several times. In 2016, police used excessive force to drive away demonstrators trying to encircle the Dhaka police headquarters over the police failure to arrest suspects for molesting women on the Dhaka University campus. Police used clubs, rifle butts, water cannon, and teargas as protesters gathered near the DMP

Law enforcers attacked students who took to the streets protesting an alleged leak of question papers for medical college admission tests. The students were demanding a fresh admission test. Police foiled their human chain and detained some students.

However, the government has kept a steady focus on economic development activities. It took up several mega projects for infrastructure development. A few of them improved road and rail communications to some extent.

Policymakers of the government have been talking much about development activities, but less about improving governance and democracy.

Accountability of the government is absent to a large extent which is contradictory to democratic norms.

The overall situation also raises questions over the transparency of the huge expenditures for major development works and apprehension about the sustainability of economic progress.

Different international organisations in their indices portrayed a gloomy picture of governance in the financial sector.

"Endemic corruption and criminality, weak rule of law, limited bureaucratic transparency, and political polarisation continue to undermine government accountability," according to the 2016 Index of Economic Freedom, an annual publication by The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street

In the global corruption index of Transparency International, Bangladesh could not do well due to poor governance. The country slipped one notch to rank the 13th most corrupt country in the world in 2015, a position jointly

shared with Guinea, Papua New Guinea, Kenya, Laos and Uganda. Freedom of the press, according to political scientists and economists, is a

primary contributor to good governance. Countries with greater press freedom tend to have strong democratic gover-

nance and less corruption. This has been once again proven in last year's two international indices on press freedom and corruption released by Reporters Without Borders (RWB)

and Transparency International. Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Norway scored high in the world press freedom index released by RWB last year. Like previous years, these are the five top ranking countries in a list of 180 nations with

greater press freedom. Bangladesh ranked 144th in world press freedom index and 139th in the TI

The rankings show the poor state of governance and freedom of the press though the AL pledged to ensure press freedom and fight graft to ensure good

Amnesty Int'l

governance.

face up to 14 years in jail for "publishing fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form" or information which "prejudices the image of

the State or person." Amnesty said the law is often used by the Bangladeshi authorities to target,

harass and imprison government critics. "On 28 November, a public report by the district police stated that the image had not been uploaded by Rasraj Das, but that someone else had used his Facebook account," added the

rights watchdog. Even the district police stated that someone else had used Rasraj's

Facebook account, said the statement. "A separate report by the National Human Rights Commission also cleared Rasraj Das of posting the image. Despite this, the charge against Rasraj Das has not been dropped and he remains detained in Brahmanbaria District Jail."

According to the statement, the arrestee's family is seriously concerned about his well-being in prison, although according to his lawyer he has not suffered torture or other illtreatment.

His next bail hearing is scheduled for Monday.

mently denied allegations about coordination between his inner circle and Russians, which were included in the

The file also included unproven Trump. It had been circulating in Washington

British intelligence agent.

dossier said to be compiled by a former claims about unusual sexual activities by

for months but only became known publicly following reports the intelligence community had briefed President Barack Obama and his successor on the dossier.

On Sunday, incoming chief of staff Reince Priebus said the New York property tycoon had accepted the US intelligence community's conclusion that Russia engaged in cyber attacks aimed at disrupting the presidential elec-In a news conference on Wednesday at

Trump Tower the president-elect acknowledged that he believed Russia was behind the hacking. "As far as hacking, I think it was

Russia," Trump said.

Meanwhile, Trump's nominee for secretary of state has refused to rule out creating a country-wide registry of Muslims. Rex Tillerson told senators at his con-

firmation hearing that he did not support a "blanket-type ban" on Muslims entering the country - a suggestion repeatedly floated by the incoming President during his election campaign.

But the former chief executive of ExxonMobil refused to rule out the creation of a database of Muslims living in

Coast Guard (west) Operation Officer

heritage site.

The government, at that time, was compelled to stop the operation of vessels on the Shela river route.

with coal in Shela on March 19, 2016.

incident as a warning sign. "Not only the Rampal power plant, the government should stop all sorts of commercial activities in the

Trump promises report in 90 days

the United States. "I would need to have a lot more information around how such an approach would even be constructed," he said in response to a question by Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen about the idea.

Although Trump has repeatedly expressed his support for a Muslim registry as part of a national security strategy, he has never clarified exactly how he would introduce it. His staff have attempted to play

down the prospect, with communications director Jason Miller denying his boss had ever advocated for the registry, despite evidence to the contrary. Asked whether he would rule out such a database, during a November appear-

go with databases. And we have no choice." Several of the President-elect's most senior appointments have also expressed doubts about a faith-based registry.

ance on ABC News, Trump said: "We

want to go with watchlists. We want to

Trump's nominee for Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, has said a registry would create constitutional issues.

stitution for separation of judiciary. The chief justice on several occasions alleged the government's unwarranted interference in the functions of the judi-

No significant measures were taken

The process of damaging the electoral system began with the January 5,

protesting the government's move to foil the alliance's programme to observe the first anniversary of the one-sided parliamentary election as "democracy killing day". Journal.