Patrol teams of forest department seize quite a few boats along with large quantities of crabs and traps from different areas of the Sundarbans as the government has imposed a two-month ban on catching the crustaceans during the ongoing breeding period.

PHOTO: **PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY**

No let-up in catching of mother crabs in breeding season

The illegal act poses threat to the species in the Sundarbans

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, *Bagerhat*

Indiscriminate catching of egg bearing crabs continues in the Sundarbans, defying the two-month government ban meant for protecting the species during the ongoing breeding season.

The callous act is going on although the patrol teams of forest department have seized boats, crabs and crab catching traps from different areas of the Sundarbans.

Visiting different areas including Sharankhola and Chandpai range of the East Sundarbans division and some areas of West Sundarbans division including Dakope, Koyra and some areas of Satkhira, this correspondent found hundreds of fishermen catching crabs and shrimps with the help of current nets and traps.

During the breeding season in January-February, crabs release eggs in mangrove forests.

Catching of crabs in this time near the Sundarbans poses threat to the species and consequently, ecological balance in the region, said Zia Hyder Chowdhury, Bagerhat district fisheries officer.

After taking permission from the forest department for catching fish in the Sundarbans, a section of people are engaged in indiscriminate trapping of deer, collecting fish larvae and netting crabs, said a forest official of East Sundarbans Division, on condition of anonymity.

Abdus Sattar, a fisherman of Chila area of East Sundarbans, said most of the fishermen of Mongla, Rampal, Sharankhola, Morrelganj of Bagerhat and Dakope, Koyra of Khulna and Satkhira earn their livelihood by fishing in the Sundarbans with pass permit.

"As the price of crab is high, traders give money in advance for crabs to the fishermen, especially during the breeding period when those are available in the Sundarbans. And so, they prefer catching crabs to fishing," he said.

Crab collected from the mangrove forest and other coastal areas of the southern region is exported to different countries.

Seeking anonymity, a crab trader said, "In January-February, there are many kinds of programmes in different countries including Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and China where the demand of crab is high. Besides, in the international market, the demand of egg bearing crab is high. Therefore, catching of the creature in mangrove forest areas is going on unabated."

"One can get five to seven kg of crabs per day. Two to three big crabs weighing 1 kg is sold for Tk 600 to 700 per kg," he added.

Contacted, Divisional Forest Officer (Sundarbans East) Mahamudul Hasan said, "Our forest guards as well as smart patrolling teams are very active in different areas of the Sundarbans. We will stop all kinds of illegal activities including crab catching in the areas at any cost."

Punish killers of journalist Shimul

Newsmen demand on his death anniv

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

A cross section of people and fellow journalists in Sirajganj's Shahjadpur upazila yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul's killers.

They also brought out a protest procession in the upazila headquarters and held a demonstration at Shahjadpur Upazila Parishad premises, marking the second death anniversary of the slain journalist.

Shimul, Shahjadpur correspondent of Daily Samakal, sustained bullet wounds during a factional clash of the upazila Awami League (AL) near the house of Shahjadpur municipality mayor on February 2, 2017.

Shimul later succumbed to his injuries while he was on his way to a hospital in the capital the following day.

Shimul's wife Nurunnahar Begum filed a case with Shahjadpur Police Station accusing 25 people, including Shahjadpur Municipality Mayor Halimul Haque Miru, the same day.

After investigation, police submitted the charge-sheet against 38 people, including Mayor Miru on May 2 the same year.

They speakers at the rally also urged the authorities concerned to shift the case under aSpeedy Trial Tribunal.

They said due to a delay in the trial process of the case, victim's family members and journalists' community are worried of getting proper justice.

Siblings' wrist, fingers cut as cow eats trees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Rivals allegedly severed the wrist and fingers of two brothers as their cow ate bean trees at Baishakhola village in Kalapara upazila of the district on Saturday.

The victims are Humayun, 35, and his brother Saidul, 18, of the village. They are farmers by profession.

Police arrested the duo's neighbor Salma Begum, wife of Abdus Salam, in connection with the incident, said Md Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kalapara Police Station.

Family members said Humayun's cow ate some bean trees of Salam. The latter then caught the cow and tied it with a tree.

When Humayun went to Salam's house to bring the cow in the evening, Salam and his men attacked Humyun with sharp weapons and cut off the wrist of his left hand and three fingers of right hand.

Hearing hue and cry, Saidul rushed to the spot and tried to save his brother. At that time, the attackers also cut off three fingers of Saidul's right hand.

The two brothers were rushed to the upazila health complex and then shifted to Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

A case was filed in this connection, said the OC.

Man to walk gallows for killing mother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing his mother in 2009.

The convict is Md Rayhan, 35, son of Md Abdur Rahman of Kazipara (Bathoi) village in Kahalu upazila.

According to the prosecution, Rayhan stabbed his mother Rowsan Ara dead following an altercation over a land on July 27 in 2009.

Later, the victim's daughter Rabeya Begum filed a murder case with Kahalu Police Station, accusing Rayhan.

After examining witnesses and evidence, Additional District Sessions Judge Md Golam Faruk found Rayhan guilty and pronounced the verdict.

Kashmiri kul changing their life

After Gazipur, this plum variety is now in Jhenidah

AZIBOR RAHMAN, *Jhenidah*

The new variety Kashmiri apple kul cultivated in the district has attracted all palm farmers for its big size, mouth-watering taste and fair price this year.

After Gazipur, it was farmed in Jhenidah for the first time, said GM Abdur Rauf, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in the district.

Eight bighas of land in Sadar and Kaliganj upazilas have been brought under the cultivation, he said.

This variety looks like a middle size apple. Its colour is red on light yellow and green. Its taste is better than other varieties like bau kul and Thai kul. Its size is larger than the two varieties.

Reaz Uddin of Kashtobhanga village under Kaliganj upazila said he collected 200 plants at Tk 10,000 from a plum farmer in Satkhira in April last year.

He cultivated the plants on one bigha of land. After nine months, the plants have borne huge number of fruits. After 15 days, he will harvest the fruits, said Reaz.

Reaz added he spent about Tk 40, 000 for attending and fencing the plot and expects that he will sell this Kashmiri variety at Tk 2 lakh.

He said apple plum and bau kul are sold at Tk 30 to Tk 70 per kg to the wholesaler while this Kashmiri apple plum will be sold at Tk 100 to Tk 150 per kg.

Farmer Bakul Hossain of Kashtobhanga village said many growers in the area cultivate different varietis of plum. But this new variety looks fine and it tastes delicious. Its demand is high. The farmers are getting interested to grow Kashmiri variety.

Another farmer Anisur Rahman of Ganna village in Sadar upazila said he has cultivated Kashmiri new variety on seven bighas of land due to its mouth-watering taste and fair price.

The DAE official said they have provided training to Anisur, Reaz and other farmers on this new variety. Its farming can be expanded by cutting branches in budding system. It is very profitable.

Farmer Reaz Uddin holds new variety Kashmiri apple kuls at his orchard in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Villagers cross the risky bamboo bridge over the Kachalong river in Rangamati's Baghaichhari upazila.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Risky bamboo bridge only means

In 2007, four people died after falling from the bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

People of five villages have been demanding a permanent concrete bridge over the Kachalong river in Baghaichhari upazila for many years as the temporary bamboo bridge they build every year gets damaged by water from the hills and becomes very risky.

The villages are Kattoli, Mogbaan, Balukhali, Jogorabil and Boradam in Bongoltoli union.

The bridge gets damaged by water from hills in monsoon every year, said the villagers, adding that they later built the bridge voluntarily.

Members of over 3000 families use this 300-foot-long vulnerable bridge daily to maintain communication with the union parishad and the upazila headquarters amid risk of accidents, they said.

Especially school and college going students and elderly people are the worst sufferers, they said.

During monsoon, people suffer a lot to cross the bridge, they added.

In 2007, four people died after falling from the bridge, said local people.

Dharma Raj Chakma, headmaster of Bongoltoli BT High School, said there are 700 students in the institution.

He urged the authorities concerned to build a permanent bridge over the river immediately considering the students' sufferings.

SSC candidaes Buddha Sadhon Chakma and Pinki Chakma of the school said a few of their classmates sustained injuries while crossing the risky bamboo bridge.

Jyano Jyoti Chakma, chairman of the union parishad, said he has already informed the higher authorities about the matter.

Contacted, upazila Local Government and Engineering Department Executive Engineer Muhammad Moniruzzaman said they have already taken plans to build a concrete bridge over the river.

Drug peddler shot by BGB

405 Yaba pills and Tk 21,630 seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Chapainawabganj*

An alleged drug peddler was shot by Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) at Satroshia in Sadar upazila of the district early yesterday.

Mohammad Ibrahim, 38, son of Enamul Haque of Char Paka in Shibganj upazila, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries in his left leg.

The border guards arrested Ibrahim on Saturday, said Lt Col Sajjad Sarwar, commanding officer (CO) of BGB 53 Battalion.

Following the arrestee's confessional statement, they went to the border area with Ibrahim around 4:45am.

Sensing the presence of BGB men, seven to eight drug peddlers gathered in the area. At one stage, Ibrahim managed to flee and joined the gang and attacked the border guards with sharp weapons.

In retaliation, the BGB men opened fire. At that time, Ibrahim's cohorts managed to flee the scene.

Later, they rescued Ibrahim with bullet injuries and also seized 405 Yaba pills and Tk 21,630 from the spot, said the CO.