



Shark is kept for drying at Putimari Char in Bagerhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Banned netting of shark continues unabated in Bay

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

A section of fishermen continue illegal netting of sharks in the Bay of Bengal as the fish is sold for good prices in different areas of the country.

Due to this, the number of sharks in the Bay of Bengal sees a gradual decrease, said a fish wholesaler at KB Ghat, a large fish landing station in Bagerhat.

Several fishermen coming to sell fish there said they go for fishing in the sea amid life risk but most of the money received from selling the catches, including those of hilsa, has to be given to the trawler owners as rent and repayment of advance money.

"We also get kamots (sharks), shaplapata and golpata fishes for which we don't have to give any money to the trawler owner. And so, we catch these to get a good return," said a Shamsu, a fisherman.

Once sharks were plenty in the Bay of Bengal but it is less available now, said Iturp, another fisherman.

A large shark weighing three to five maunds can be sold for Tk 30,000 to 50,000 while a small sized shark, locally called churi kamot, brings up to Tk 150 each, said fishermen.

Fish wholesalers at KB Ghat, Pathorghata, Pararhaat as well as fish drying centres at Dublar Char and Putimari Char in the Sundarbans buy these sharks to sell for

high prices in different areas of the country. Shark fins often find way to posh hotels, stakeholders said, adding that the item is also exported to different countries.

"We buy churi kamot from KB Bazar. After drying, we send it to Chattogram. The item is also available in Barishal, Pathorghata, Barguna, and Cox's Bazar," a leader of Bagerhat Coastal Fisheries Association said, seeking anonymity.

Prof Dr Md Nazmul Hasan of the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resource Technology of Khulna University said there is no statistics on the number of sharks in the coastal waters of Bangladesh.

"Assessment of the stock and further research on sharks in the Bay of Bengal is needed to protect this species," he said.

Wildlife (Protection and Security) Act, 2012, prohibits catching of many species including dolphins and sharks in the Bay, said Mahmudul Hasan, divisional forest officer of the Sundarbans (East) Forest Division.

"In December, awareness campaigns will be conducted in different areas including Dublar Char, Meher Alir Char and Majher Kella to prevent catching of sharks and dolphins in the Sundarbans and the Bay. Besides, raids will be conducted if there is information of drying shark anywhere," he said.

Youth killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A young man was beaten to death over playing cricket at Pashora village in Faridpur Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Jewel Sheikh, 25, son of late Alamuddin of Pashora village. He was a day labourer.

Jobeda Begum, aunt of Jewel, said Jewel locked in an altercation with one Abir Sheikh, 21, son of Sheikh Azad of the same village, over playing cricket in the area on Friday.

Later, Abir took Jewel to his house where Sheikh Azad beat him mercilessly. After returning home, Jewel became sick.

Jewel died on way to Faridpur Medical College Hospital yesterday morning, said Jobeda.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach Sheikh Azad for his comment on the issue as his cellphone was switched off.

TRIPLE MURDER IN BANARIPARA, BARISHAL

Police make three arrests

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Police on Saturday and Sunday made three arrests in connection with killings of three of a family in Banaripara upazila of Barishal on December 7.

Shishir Kumar Paul, OC of Banaripara Police Station, said they arrested two suspects -- Zakir Hossain, a mason from Nalchhity in Jhalakathi; and Jewel, from Kaunia area in Barishal city -- on Saturday.

They arrested Mishkat, daughter-in-law of victim Mariam Begum, 75, on Sunday night, he added.

Mishkat's husband and Mariam's son Abdur Rouf is currently in Kuwait.

The OC said Zakir and Jewel in their confessional statements made with a Barishal court on Sunday admitted to have killed Mariam, her nephew Yousuf, 18, and her son-in-law Mohammad Alam, 55, a retired primary school teacher from Pirojpur's Swarupkathi upazila.

The killers also stole some gold jewellery from Mariam's house, he added.

According to their statements, mason Zakir developed physical relations with Mishkat while he was staying in Sailiabakpur village for nearly a year to construct a house for Mishkat's husband.

Mishkat and Zakir decided to kill Mariam and Yousuf as Mariam found out

about their affair from Yousuf. Jewel was hired to help Zakir in the killings.

Around 1:00am on December 7, after Mishkat opened the door, Zakir and Jewel entered the house and first strangled Yousuf to death. They then killed Alam, who was incidentally staying at the house that night, as he witnessed Yousuf's murder. The last one they killed was Mariam.

Mishkat sent Tk 4,000 to Zakir from her cell phone for Jewel's payment and the money was collected from a bKash agent in Barishal launch terminal area around 4:30am that day.

Mohammad Abdur Rakib, additional superintendent of police (ASP) in Barishal, said they made the arrests tracking the financial transactions made from the cell phones of the arrestees.

Police seized the cell phone that was used to withdraw the money as well as the stolen gold jewellery from Zakir and Jewel's possession.

Both Zakir and Jewel were sent to Barishal Jail and Mishkat was produced to the court with a remand prayer for five days.

Mishkat admitted to the affair, but she denied her involvement in the killings, ASP Rakib added.

Mariam's younger son Sultan Mahmud filed a murder case with Banaripara Police Station on the day the bodies were found.

LIBERATION WAR '71

Mymensingh freed on this day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

December 10 is a red letter day for the people of Mymensingh as the district tasted freedom from the Pakistani occupation army on the day in 1971.

On April 17 in 1971, a fierce battle took place between Pak army and the freedom fighters in Tangail's Kalihati and it continued for five days.

The Pak troops managed to enter Mymensingh town on April 22.

The freedom fighters built their stronghold in bordering Haluaghat upazila of the district.

Between May and November in 1971, the freedom fighters and the Pakistani occupation forces locked in fierce fighting at different places of the district and surrounding areas, where both sides witnessed heavy casualties.

On December 7, the freedom fighters freed Haluaghat from the occupation forces and on December 8, Phulpur and Bhaluka upazilas were freed.

Liberation of Gouripur, Trishal, Ishwarganj and Tarakanda areas followed as the valiant freedom fighters forced the enemy to retreat from their occupied places in the district.



Muktijuddho Smriti Saudha, a memorial built in honour of Liberation War martyrs, on the bank of the Brahmaputra river in Mymensingh town. PHOTO: STAR

On December 10, freedom fighters led by Principal Motiur Rahman and Indian allied forces entered the town, driving out the occupation forces.

A large number of freedom fighters as well as ordinary freedom loving people in the district sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the motherland.

To keep the martyrs' memory alive, a Liberation War memorial titled "Muktijuddho Smriti Saudha" was

built on the bank of the Brahmaputra river in the town in 2000.

The district administration, Muktijuddho Sangsad's district unit and Mymensingh Free and Victory Day Celebration Committee have jointly taken a week-long programme, at Chhoto Bazar 'Mukto Mancha' from today marking the day, said Ziauddin Ahmed, former assistant commander of Muktijuddho Sangsad, Mymensingh.

Rights groups call for boycott

FROM PAGE 2

killings and rape.

Myanmar authorities have strongly disputed that conclusion, categorising the military operation as a legitimate counterterrorism response to attacks by Rohingya militants that killed 13 members of the security forces.

During three days of hearings, Gambia's legal team will ask the 16-member panel of UN judges at the International Criminal Court of Justice to impose "provisional measures" to protect the Rohingya before the case can be heard in full.

Suu Kyi's office said last month that she would lead her country's team in The Hague to "defend the national interest".

REFUGEES PRAY

The Free Rohingya Coalition said in a statement it was starting the "Boycott Myanmar Campaign" with 30 organisations in 10 countries. It called on "corporations, foreign investors, professional and cultural organisations to sever their

institutional ties with Myanmar".

It said the boycott was intended to "bring to bear economic, cultural, diplomatic and political pressure on Myanmar's coalition government of Aung San Suu Kyi and the military".

In the sprawling Bangladeshi camps where they now live as refugees, some Rohingya said they were praying to see justice delivered. One man read aloud to a group from a newspaper article about the hearings.

"Once Aung San Suu Kyi was an icon of peace and we had huge expectations that things would change when she came to power," said 65-year-old Nur Alam, who said his son was shot dead by soldiers during the crackdown.

"We prayed for her, but she has now become an icon of genocide... Shame on her."

In her tent, 31-year-old Momtaz Begum shed tears as she recalled how soldiers locked her in her house in northern Rakhine state and set fire to the roof. She escaped to find her three sons dead and her daughter beaten

and bleeding, she said.

"The army killed my husband," she said. "They raped me and torched my house, they stabbed my 6-year-old daughter in the head. Why did they kill our innocent people, our kids? Why did they torture and rape our women? We demand justice."

Myanmar has previously denied almost all allegations made by refugees against its troops, including of mass rape, killings and arson, and promised to punish any soldiers involved in what it says were isolated cases of wrongdoing.

In Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin state in northern Myanmar near the border with China, hundreds of people marched in support of the Suu Kyi.

A mixed crowd, young and old, walked carrying posters saying "we stand with our leader" and wearing headbands with the slogan "we stand with Mother Suu". More demonstrations are planned in the major cities Yangon and Mandalay when the hearings begin.

Commuters suffer for years for want of bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

People of six villages in Sadullapur union of Gopalganj's Kotalipara upazila have been suffering for long for want of a permanent bridge over a canal.

Locals said around four thousand villagers use a makeshift bamboo bridge on the canal to reach their destination.

Especially school kids are the worst sufferers due to the communication problem.

The suffering is beyond description when they need to take a critical patient to hospitals in the upazila or district headquarters, said the villagers.

People of Tikoriyabari, Kalibari, Golabari, Bohorabari, Daskhin Kandi and Hajrabari villages use the

40-foot-long bamboo bridge to go to their destinations including different education institutions and markets every day.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found villagers crossing the makeshift bamboo bridge on the canal amid risk of accident.

Sudhir Barai, 85, of Hajrabari village, said a permanent bridge is badly needed for the canal.

"I have to cross the canal twice a month to visit doctors in the district headquarters, which is really very tough for me. If a permanent bridge is built there, he can take a rickshaw to visit the doctors," said Sudhir.

Mausumi Dhali, 15, a student of Class IX of Hajrabar-Tikabari High School, said they have to cross the canal six times a day to go to the

school and the private tutor's house amid risk of accident.

Ninth-grade Ashis Barai, 14, of the same school, said "If we do not use the bamboo bridge, we have to walk more three kilometres to go to our school."

Bhim Barai, chairman of Sadullapur Union Parishad (UP), said people of the area are suffering a lot for long for want of a permanent bridge over the canal.

They have already informed the authorities concerned about the matter but to no respond yet, said the UP chairman.

Rashedur Rahman, project implementation officer (PIO) in Kotalipara upazila, said "I joined here a few days ago. Yet will take immediate steps to build a permanent bridge on the canal."

Archers create

FROM PAGE 1

compound individual and Suma Biswash in women's compound individual events.

Ruman, Sohel and Ety bagged three gold medals each, with Ety, the 14-year-old archer from Chuadanga, becoming the first female athlete from the country to win three gold medals in a single edition of the Games.

The record for the highest number of gold medals for any athlete -- male or female -- belongs to swimmer Mosharrif Hossain, who won five gold medals in the 1985 SA Games held in Dhaka.

Ety's effort also helped archery become the most successful discipline in a single edition for Bangladesh with 10 gold medals -- three more than the haul shooting had gotten in the 1993 SA Games, the second time Dhaka had hosted the regional multi-sport extravaganza.

Bangladesh also won one bronze medal in archery, courtesy of

compound archer Ashim Kumar Das, even though they failed to win a silver medal from the discipline.

The 10 gold medals in archery and one in men's cricket in Kathmandu later in the day took Bangladesh to 19 gold medals, one more than their previous best of 18, set in the 2010 SA Games when Bangladesh had hosted the Games for the third time.

Bangladesh athletes also won one silver medal in swimming, one in fencing and one in boxing as well as two bronze in wrestling, two in fencing and one in boxing.

The overall tally of medals at the end of the day rose to 133 -- 19 gold, 34 silver and 80 bronze -- making it the most successful SA Games for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's previous best effort was 18 gold, 23 silver and 56 bronze medals in 2010 for a total of 97 medals to finish in third position,

even though there were only 158 gold medals on offer in 23 disciplines in 2010 against 317 gold in 26 disciplines this time around.

Despite the rise in medals, Bangladesh were still in fifth position, where they are expected to finish as the Games conclude today with only a handful of events remaining.

India, like the previous 12 editions, were on top of the tally followed by Nepal in second position, Sri Lanka in third and Pakistan in fourth.

Maldives, having won their first ever gold medal in the history of the Games courtesy of sprinter Hassan Saaid in the 100m sprint, are ahead of Bhutan, who have a few silver and bronze medals. But Bhutan would love to grab their first gold medal from this edition when they square off against hosts and defending champions Nepal in the final of men's football in Kathmandu today.



PHOTO: STAR

Two elderly men cross the bamboo bridge over the canal amid risk of accident in Gopalganj's Kotalipara upazila.