



Labourers unloading hilsa from a trawler at Mohipur Fish Landing Station in Patuakhali’s Kalapara upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Hilsa production trebles in 10yrs

According to Patuakhali fisheries department, 46.540 tonnes of hilsa was collected in fiscal year 2018-19, rising from 14.2 tonnes in 2008-09

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The national fish has grown in size and numbers in the highest in a decade in Patuakhali, as the government has taken steps specific to their breeding season for eight months in a year.

According to data from the Patuakhali fisheries department, a total of 46.540 tonnes of hilsa was collected in fiscal 2018-19, rising from 14.2 tonnes in 2008-09.

Of all the fish collected last year, 17.040 tonnes were from the rivers, marking a fivefold hike from only 3.6 tonnes a decade ago, and the rest was from the sea, said Md Emdadullah, Patuakhali district

fisheries officer (DFO).

“We are motivating the fishermen and fish traders to obey the ban periods, specific to the brood hilsa and jatka (hilsa less than 10 inches long), to contribute to the growing economy.”

According to rules, there is a 22-day fishing ban from October 7 to 28 every year to save the mother hilsa during its reproductive season.

Secondly, there is a two-month ban from March 1 to April 30 on the 100 kilometre hilsa sanctuary at the Tentulia river from Bhola’s Veduria area to Char Rustam under Patuakhali’s Rangabali upazila via Char

Kazal and Char Biswash under Galachipa upazila, to allow growth of the fish.

Thirdly, there is an eight-month ban from November to June on jatka netting in the Bay of Bengal.

Lastly, there is a 65-day ban from May 20 to July 23 on hilsa fishing.

The fisheries department imposed the ban in accordance to section 19 of the Marine Fisheries Ordinance 1883 (amendment in 2015), though it is being implemented for the first time in the coastal areas from this year.

The hilsa management policy of Bangladesh has become a model and India

and Myanmar are following it, he said.

Nazrul Islam, 45, a fisherman of Borobaishdia area under Rangabali, said, “We are happy that hilsa production is going up every year, as we are getting benefitted from it.”

Although fishermen face momentary difficulties during the ban periods, they are ultimately happy as the size and number rise, said Md Ansar Uddin Mollah, president of Kalapara Upazila Fish Traders Association.

Fish traders are also pleased as they are earning progressively better each year, he added.

Drive to free Ichamati river starts today

Many occupiers already shifted structures from river land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

The district administration in cooperation with the Water Development Board (WDB) authorities will start the long awaited eviction drive today to free the Ichamati river flowing through the district town.

Primarily the drive will be conducted according to the list of 285 illegal occupiers, prepared by the WDB and the district administration a decade ago, said Md Mosharaf Hossain, assistant director of WDB, Pabna.

“Besides, a recent feasibility study has found a large number of occupiers. The entire river will be freed from illegal occupiers as the Ministry of Water Resources has taken a mega project to make the river alive by freeing it according to the CS map,”

he added.

Starting in Pabna’s Shibrapur, the Ichamati runs an 84 kilometre course across the district before meeting the Jamuna in Bera upazila. But the river is now hardly visible in its nine kilometre area in Pabna municipality due to illegal occupation and building of structures for decades.

According to the government’s Cadastral Survey (CS) records published in 1922, the 9-km section of the river that flows through Pabna municipality had 88.58 acres of riverbed.

But the area dropped to only 54.53 acres, as shown in the most recent Bangladesh Survey (BS) record map in 2013, said officials at the district settlement office.

“The eviction drive will continue to free the river according to the CS map. We earlier served notice and made a

general announcement to free the river lands within December 22,” said Kabir Mahmud, deputy commissioner of Pabna.

Meanwhile, a large number of illegal occupiers have already shifted their furniture from homes, many of them also demolished their concrete buildings to take doors, windows and bricks.

Visiting Sadhupara, Mondolpara and Kacharipara areas of the town yesterday morning, this correspondent saw many people removing their structures from the river lands with their own efforts.

A large number of people, to be affected by the eviction drive, yesterday formed a human chain in front of Pabna Press Club and also brought out a procession in the district town protesting the administration’s move.



Occupier of a house, built apparently on the land of the Ichamati river at Kadomtali in Pabna town, shift belongings from the structure yesterday as the district administration is going to start a drive to demolish illegal structures from the river areas in the district headquarters today.

PHOTO: STAR

Woman burnt while warming by fire, dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

A woman who sustained 75 percent burn injuries while warming herself by fire on Saturday died at Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The victim was identified as Sugandhya Rani, 25, daughter of Nimai Chandra Shil of Charpara village under Barguna’s Taltali upazila.

As the woman was divorced, she stayed with her father Nimai, a barber by profession.

Nimai said when Sugandhya Rani was warming herself by the fire at their house yard on Saturday morning, her clothes caught fire.

She was later rushed to the upazila health complex where on-duty doctor referred her to Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital as her condition worsened. She died there yesterday morning.

FEUD OVER DISPUTED LAND

College boy stabbed dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barishal*

A college was stabbed to death in attack by rivals allegedly over a land dispute in Bakerganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Sajib Karigar, 20, son of Razzak Karigar of Puidata village in the upazila, was an Intermediate student at Maheshpur Degree College.

Deceased’s cousin Sajeda Begum said there had been a longstanding feud between their family and one Subrata Sarker of the village over the ownership of a disputed land.

The incident occurred, when Subrata and his men attacked slain Sajib’s uncle Taiyab Ali Karigar as the later tried to resist the gang from cutting earth from the disputed land yesterday morning.

At one stage, when Sajib tried to save his uncle from the attackers they stabbed Sajib on the chest with a knife, leaving him dead on the spot.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Barishal Range) Abdur Rakib said they have already detained eight people, including Subrata, for their alleged involvement in the murder.

SELLING PORN VIDEOS

Rab detains 16

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested 16 youths from Saptapati market in the town on charge of selling video clips of pornography.

On information, a team of Rab-12, led by acting company commander Md Rawson Ali, also the assistant superintendent of police, raided the market and arrested the 16 with 48 computer hard disks used for pornography.

They also used 30 sim cards from their possession, said Rawson., adding that they found pornography clips into the hard disks, kept for selling.

The arrestees are Md Ariful Islam, 20, Md Mostafizar Rahman, 25, Md Abdul Ohab, 21, Md Rasel Hossain, 22, Md Sadekur Rahman, 20, Md Rakib Hossain, 20, Md Samiul Islam, 19, Md Mosaddikur Rahman Manik, 20, Md Ripon Pramanik, 20, Md Enamul Haque, 23, Md Rashed Hossain, 21, Md Nur Alam, 21, Md Sohag Islam, 19, Md Bappi Hossain, 21, Md Zihad Hossain, 20, and Md Mehedi Hasan, 28.



A section of Patgram-Dahagram road that is being reconstructed by Roads and Highways Department in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

RECONSTRUCTION OF PATGRAM-DAHAGRAM ROAD

Locals question quality of materials being used

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

After over two weeks of suspension, from December 2 to 17, amid allegations of using substandard materials, work of a Tk 22.13-crore road reconstruction project in Patgram upazila resumed with the same materials.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in August this year issued work order for widening a 16-km-long section of Patgram-Dahagram road to joint consortium of Rana Builders, Rizvi Construction and Hasan Techno Builders. The work also includes building of four culverts on the road, according to RHD in Lalmonirhat.

Residents of Dahagram village said the contractor stopped work in early December when the former raised

objections in the use of substandard sand and stones that were collected locally and supplied by influential locals.

They also said only sand from Sylhet and stones from overseas are approved as construction materials for roads built under the RHD.

Besides, instead of ensuring a sand-stone ratio of 40:60, the contractor was mixing the materials in a 60:40 ratio, alleged Rabiul Islam, from Panbari village in Dahagram union.

Even though the materials being used in the road are not as per RHD standard, the engineers at RHD are keeping mum about it, he also said.

“We made them stop the work... But now we see the construction firm using the same substandard

materials again,” Belal Hossain, an elderly resident of the same village, said frustratingly.

He further said local influential suppliers, affiliated with the ruling party, even issued threats on villagers for protesting the irregularities with the road work.

Pointing fingers at corrupt RHD officials behind the irregularities, another elderly villager, Mohammad Ali, said the road built with such low-quality materials will not withstand the weight of heavy vehicles in the long run.

RHD’s Sub Assistant Engineer Alamgir Hossain, tasked with overseeing the work, claimed that they had collected samples of the materials from the site and those passed tests in their laboratory.