



Some of the hilsa on sale at KB Bazar in Bagerhat. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY

Fishing trawlers getting poor catch from Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Southern region's largest fish market and fishing trawler landing station, KB Bazar in Bagerhat, is witnessing a poor supply of fish after a 65-day ban on fishing at sea was over on July 23.

Unabated fishing by Indian fishing trawlers near the Bangladesh maritime borders during the fishing ban might have depleted fish population in the Bay of Bengal, speculated many fishers in Bagerhat.

Some of the local fishers also blamed the recent turbulent weather for the dwindling catch in the Bay.

In the morning this Sunday, while visiting KB Bazar -- located by the town protection embankment along the Daratana River, the area was seen teeming with fishers, sellers and buyers.

Out of all fish varieties, hilsa is the highest selling commodity at the market where daily trade amounts to several crores of taka.

Aside from hilsa, at least 50 different varieties of fish -- including Kaula, Koilya Bhol, Jaba Bhol, Mochan Gagra, Chela, Dhela, Laitta, Bhol, Kankon, Meid, Tengra, Rupchanda and

Botal -- are usually available at KB Bazar.

A single piece of hilsa, weighing 1 kilogram, was being sold for between Tk 1,000 and Tk 1,100. The smaller ones, weighing 500 grams each, were being sold for Tk 500 per kg. The rest were selling in sets of 4 to 6 pieces at Tk 300 to Tk 450 each kg.

Many fishers said freshly caught fish could have been sold at higher prices if imported frozen fish were not allowed to be sold at the same market.

Kabir, who brought sea fish to KB Bazar for sale, said while Bangladeshi fishers refrained from catching fish in the sea during the ban, large Indian fishing trawlers continued to catch fish near the Bangladesh maritime boundaries.

For that reason, fishers in Bangladesh have not been getting a good catch now despite their compliance with the lengthy ban, he added.

"We support the ban imposed by our government, but the Indian fishermen had been catching fish along our boundary lines all this time," alleged another fisher named Shukkur.

"The handful of fish we are getting now does not even cover our voyage cost. Moreover, fish prices have been falling at markets due to the

ongoing lockdown," he lamented.

Bagerhat Coastal Fishermen's Association President Sheikh Idris Ali said over one lakh fishers and their families depend on fishing at the sea.

But this time around, their livelihood is at risk as many fishing trawlers have been incurring huge losses after returning empty-handed amid the turbulent sea.

Contacted, Bagerhat District Fisheries Officer ASM Russell said the rough seas might be one of the reasons behind the poor catch of fish at this time.

Acknowledging that fishing ban periods in Bangladesh and India are different, he said the ministry concerned has been working on to adopt a common maritime fishing ban calendar for the region under the banner of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

On the alleged netting of fish along the Bangladesh maritime boundaries by Indian fishing trawlers during the fishing ban in Bangladesh, he said in order to thwart such attempts by intruders, the maritime boundaries of the country are under constant surveillance by the navy and coast guard.

Jamuna erosion intensifies with receding water level

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The Jamuna has become furious in Tangail with receding water level devouring several hundred of dwelling houses, roads, markets, weaving factories, poultry farms and different other structures as well as vast tracks of croplands for the last two weeks.

Of these, around one hundred families at Durgapur union in Kalihati upazila lost their dwelling houses in the last couple of days.

The erosion hit the Bhairabbari village in the union on Friday night (July 23) and continued to Saturday (July 24), devouring 14 dwelling houses while 78 families shifted their moveable to evade the wrath of the river, said Anwar Hossain, chairman of the union parishad.

Many of the dwelling houses and other structures also remain on the threat erosion and people living there were passing sleepless nights.

Most of the homeless families were living under the open sky while some others took shelter to relatives and neighbors' houses.

Being informed, Deputy Commissioner Dr Ataul Gani along with local government officials and public representatives visited the area on Sunday and distributed cash money and foods among the affected villagers.

The DC said that the Water Development Board (WDB) had already started dumping GEO bags to check the erosion.

"The government will stay beside the erosion affected villagers and they will be provided necessary supports, including corrugated iron sheets and cash money so that they can construct houses to other places," he added.

Meanwhile, Sadar, Kalihati, Nagarpur and Bhuapur upazilas of the district are at a closer proximity to the Jamuna river. This time the erosion of the river started at the beginning of the monsoon. The erosion has intensified since July 12 with decreasing

water level.

Meanwhile, around one hundred structures including dwelling houses, weaving factories, a saw mills, a market and vast tracks of croplands in three wards of Kakua union of Sadar upazila were devoured by the river within couple of days (from July 10 to 12).

The other erosion affected areas in Sadar upazila are Makarkol, Keshabmairhail, Titulia, Nayapara, Kukuria and Barbaria of Mahmudnagar union, Deorgachha, Rashidpur, Ichhapasha, Khoshalia, Chanpasha and Nandapasha of Katulee union, and Maspur, Barbel, Chakgopal, and Kachua of Huga union.

Poet Masum Ferdous, a man from Huga of Sadar upazila, said the concerned department and other quarters looted crores of taka every year in the name of emergency works when the erosion started during monsoon. However, the nominal works could not save the areas from the erosion but made some quarter rich.

"The areas are getting smaller by the years due to the erosion and there is no alternative of constructing permanent dam to protect the area from disappearing," he added.

On the other hand, the Paishka Majhail, Khas Ghunipara, Khas Tebaria, Char Solimabad, and Bhuter More of Solimabad union and Shahjani, Bharra, Pachara and Agdigholia of Bharra union and also Doptori union of Nagarpur upazila, and Govindasi and Gabsara in Bhuapur upazila were also hit hard by the erosion of the river.

There is no data available that how many people have become absolutely destitute by the river.

Mohammad Sirajul Islam, executive engineer of WDB in Tangail, said works of dumping GEO bags were going on at the affected areas to check the erosion. "It will take time to construct permanent embankments in the areas," he added.



A view of erosion affected Durgapur area in Tangail's Kalihati upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

AI statement on DSA 'motivated'

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including cases filed under the DSA, has received 199 cases between January 1 and May 6 this year.

Amnesty International has found that 134 of those cases clearly specified the sections under the DSA. Eighty percent of those cases (or 107 out of 134) were filed under both sections 25 and 29 of the DSA, the statement added.

Section 25 refers to the transmission, publication, etc. of offensive, false or threatening data or information, section 29 pertains to the publication, transmission, etc. of defamatory information and section 31 criminalises a person for deteriorating law and order.

"The way in which defamation is criminalised under the DSA shows the serious shortcomings of a criminal approach to defamation, where the law has been further instrumentalised to silence dissent," the statement said.

The rights body called on the Bangladesh authorities to ensure that defamation was treated as a matter for civil litigation, not criminal, the statement said.

Hasan yesterday said Amnesty International did not issue any statement when hundreds of people were killed by petrol bombs in Bangladesh. They had also issued statements in favour of war criminals.

He said, "Even, they remained silent when people were killed like birds in Palestine. In fact, the acceptability of the organisation has been lost."

The minister added that the DSA was enacted for ensuring security of the people of the country.

"The act is for all, including housewives, farmers, rickshaw pullers, officials and journalists."

He said the act is needed to ensure digital security of people to save them from harassment on digital platforms.

The minister said such an act is also there in many countries, including neighbouring India and Pakistan, Singapore, Australia and many of the countries of the European Union.

"So, it is motivated to make statements over the act repeatedly," he added.

Humayun Ahmed's family serves

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The episodes have over three million views.

The family claims Grameenphone did not comply with the customary laws for such use (of intellectual property), which resulted in a violation of the intellectual property law.

In this regard, Humayun's wife Shaon said that among the many characters created by Humayun Ahmed, Baker Bhai, Elachi Begum, Sobhan Saheb and Taiyab Ali are very popular and still in the hearts of the viewers.

Unauthorised and commercial use of all these characters are clear violations of Humayun Ahmed's intellectual property rights.

His family members said they will do their best to protect his intellectual property and rely on the existing laws in this regard.

In the legal notice, Humayun's family members have asked Grameenphone to remove the infringing episodes within three days and pay the financial compensation within 15 days.

The matter, otherwise, will be resolved through court, the late author's heirs said.

Contacted, Grameenphone said the legal notice was served in connection with a full-length radio show and an abridged social media content, originally produced by Radio Shadhin.

While the company reserves its rights and is currently assessing the legal notice, it took down the content from social media out of respect for Humayun Ahmed's family members.

It said it sincerely respects and treasures the contributions of the legendary author and honours the views and emotions his family.

Huge comet heading close enough

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of the solar system, beyond Neptune's orbit. UN271, is from the outskirts of our solar system and has been making its way toward our sun for millions of years. This is also the most distant comet to be discovered on its inbound journey, which will provide scientists a chance to observe and study it for years to come.

Comet Bernardinelli-Bernstein was found in six years of data collected by the Dark Energy Camera, which is located on the Victor M. Blanco 4-meter Telescope at Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in Chile. The data collected by this camera feeds into The Dark Energy Survey, a collaboration of more than 400 scientists across seven countries and 25 institutions.

The camera, also known as DECam, is helping to map 300 million galaxies across the night sky -- but it also captures glimpses of comets and trans-Neptunian objects, or icy celestial bodies that reside along the outskirts

of the solar system, beyond Neptune's orbit.

Bernardinelli and Bernstein used algorithms at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to identify trans-Neptunian objects. During their work, the astronomers traced 32 detections to one object.

Comets are icy relics that were kicked out of the solar system when the giant planets formed and migrated to their current configurations. As comets approach our sun during their orbits, their ices evaporate, creating their signature appearance.

Comets include a nucleus, or the solid "dirty snowball" at its center. Comas are the gaseous clouds that form around the nucleus as the comet's ices evaporate. The evaporating gas and dust is pushed behind the comet as well, creating two tails illuminated by sunlight. These tails can be hundreds or even millions of miles in length.

Woman held over NGO

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from her house.

Nurul Amin, husband of the woman, said his wife took a loan of Tk 1 lakh from TMSS (Thangamara Mohila Sabuj Sango) in 2017.

She paid all installments except two, said Nurul. Later, she paid the two installments but had not taken the "no claim paper" from the NGO. The NGO officials did not inform them about the case, he said.

All of the sudden, police arrested my wife and took her to police station with our infant child, the husband said.

They have no member named Shahnaz Parvin but they had one a long time ago, claimed Abdul Alim, manager of TMSS Shreepur Branch-1.

Low over the Bay

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All boats and trawlers over north Bay have been advised to come close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.

Lost Muslim yarn know

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The project, which started in July 2018 and wrapped up last month, started with training six weavers to churn out fabrics with 200 to 557 yarn count. Now, 75 weavers can produce such fine fabrics.

The muslim of yore was renowned for its fineness, with its yarn count starting from 250 and going up to 1,000.

"Since the project started, we have had to go through seven steps from hand-spinning cotton to fabric production and fabric making. We used lots of data from several kinds of research, which brought us success," Ayub Ali, project director and chief planning officer at the BHB.

The whole exercise cost Tk 3.9 crore, meaning about Tk 8 crore assigned to the project has been saved.

With the rest of the money, a muslim centre would be set up on 3.5 acres of land in Narayanganj, where a plant of the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation currently stands, he said.

A revised proposal has been sent to the planning commission for cotton cultivation, production of skilled spinners and weavers, purchase of machinery and construction of sheds etc.

"This project will help to restore the golden heritage of Bangladesh, which was lost almost 170 years ago," Ali said, adding that the fabric will be available to the public by next year.

For the feat, the BHB was awarded the Public Administration Medal under the Technical Research (science-based) category for 2020 and 2021 at an event yesterday.

"It is possible to earn a huge amount of foreign exchange by exporting muslin and to brighten the image of Bangladesh in the international arena," said Golam Dastagir Gazi, textiles and jute minister, at the event.

The acquisition of GI certificate and patent for muslin has created the opportunity for sustainable development and expansion of the country's weaving industry, he added.

Yahya will commit suicide

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He further informed, "Yahya told me that they had pinpointed 29 camps within India where guerrillas were being trained. Now I hate to tell you this, Mr President, but the guerrilla threat is growing by leaps and bounds. They're averaging 18 Pakistanis a day now; they are averaging two bridges a day. Killing that many. And this is [unclear]. And once the refugees get there, they are being prohibited, are prevented from coming back by Indira's own statement. Political accommodation in her book means Bangladesh. This is bad."

The three top officials of the American administration were very unhappy over the activities of American officials posted in India and Dhaka. Nixon reproached, "They're basically pro-Indian. ... And they want to believe what the American press is writing. And the Indian press, of course, the American press is the same as the Indian press, follows everything they say."

Ambassador Farland expressed his disgust of Archer Blood, consul general in Dhaka, and Eric Griffel, associate director in charge of AID operations in Dhaka, for blowing the whistle on the Pakistani atrocity. Archer Blood was already called back to Washington. Farland requested Nixon to get rid of Griffel. Nixon added, "Sick bastards."

INDIAN MUSLIMS MISLED

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra today

reported that leaflets in Urdu carrying vicious lies against the people of Bangladesh were being distributed by Pakistani agents in Kolkata. "These leaflets are not only being quoted in a section of Indian Urdu press but some irresponsible editors feel roused enough to publish lurid accounts of imaginary massacres of Urdu-speaking refugees by Bangalee nationalists during the month of March," added the clandestine radio operated by the Bangladesh government-in-exile.

As a result, the radio station said, there were unmistakable indications that a section of Indian Muslims was finding it difficult to sympathise with the suffering millions of Bangladesh.

KENNEDY PLANS TO VISIT BANGLADESHI REFUGEES

American Senator Edward M Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, would visit India and Pakistan soon, shared the senator's office today. Kennedy, who was chairman of the senate judiciary subcommittee on refugees, had received a visa for India. He applied for a visa to Pakistan. Senate sources said Kennedy would seek to inspect the relief programme for 7.1 million Bangladeshi refugees who had fled to India.

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NSO 'should be sanctioned'

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The findings of the Pegasus project reignited concerns about government surveillance carried out through technology provided by private companies.

"Enough is enough. The recent revelations regarding misuse of the NSO Group's software reinforce our conviction that the hacking for hire industry must be brought under control," Representatives Tom Malinowski (D-N.J.), Katie Porter (D-Calif.), Joaquin Castro (D-Tex.) and

Anna G. Eshoo (D-Calif.) said in a joint statement.

The lawmakers added that companies that sell such tools to authoritarian regimes "should be sanctioned, and if necessary, shut down."

They called on the Commerce Department to consider adding the NSO Group and any companies engaged in similar behavior to its economic blacklist and to impose sanctions on its "abusive" clients under federal law.

WB to finance extra jobs

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(WHO), the Gavi vaccine alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

The financing mechanism "will allow Covax to unlock additional doses for low- and middle-income countries" Gavi chief executive Seth Berkley said in a statement.

"As we move beyond initial targets and work to support countries' efforts to protect increasingly large portions of their populations, World Bank financing will help us advance further towards our goal of bringing Covid-19 under control," he said.

INDONESIA LOGS RECORD DEATHS

The coronavirus has killed at least 4,169,966 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP yesterday.

Indonesia reported a record 2,069 coronavirus deaths in 24 hours yesterday as the Southeast Asian nation faces its deadliest Covid-19 surge since the pandemic began.

Yesterday's grim tally was nearly 600 deaths higher than the previous day and topped last week's daily record 1,566 deaths, the health ministry said. New infections also shot up to just over 45,000, from about 28,000 on Monday.