

INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY

Tiger footage spurs hope for big cat population

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

The number of Bengal tigers in the Sundarbans have increased in the last five years, according to forest department officials. However, they are yet to figure out the numbers.



FILE PHOTO

As per the officials, they came up with the observation following a four-month long camera trapping study covering 2,600 kilometres in the west zone of the forest. "We are scrutinising the images obtained through camera trapping. We will be

able to round off to numbers after completing the analysis," said Abu Naser Mohsin Hossain, divisional forest officer of Sundarban West Forest Division.

Around 1,300 cameras were set up at different spots in the zone for the survey during January to April this year, said officials.

Of the total, tiger images were captured by around 55 percent of the installed cameras. The assumption was based on this observation, informed a

study-team member, wishing anonymity.

"Images of tigers, including those of mothers and cubs, were recorded on cameras. Now, we will analyse their stripes and movements to calculate the numbers. But we assume that the number of tigers have increased since the last census that was conducted in 2018," he added.

There were 114 tigers in the Sundarbans in Bangladesh, according to the last survey conducted in 2018.

The forest department conducted the new study to update information in this regard.

"The camera trapping is very helpful if one looks to study tiger and other animal behaviours," said Mihir Kumar, conservator of forest in Khulna circle.

In the second phase of the study, the department will begin a similar study at the Eastern Forest Division of the Sundarbans. The study will commence in November this year.

CHATTOGRAM-10

Campaigning ends, by-polls tomorrow

STAR REPORT

With the by-polls for Chattoagram-10 (Double Mooring, Pahartoli, Halishahar) scheduled to take place tomorrow, the electoral campaign ended yesterday midnight.



Public holiday has been declared in the constituency on the voting day.

"The voting will take place through 1,261 polling booths in 156 centres. Starting from 8:00am, it will go on till 4:00pm through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)," reports BSS citing returning officer and Chattoagram Regional Polling Officer Mohammad Hasanuzzaman.

"We have kept a total of 2,110 EVMs for the voting," he added.

A total of 4,106 police personnel will be on duty tomorrow, while eight executive magistrates and two judicial magistrates will be on the field from today till August 1 to avoid any untoward incidents, he said.

Although four candidates are contesting from different political parties, only the Awami League candidate campaigned in full swing.

Md Mohiuddin Bachchu, Shamsul Alam, Dipak Kumar Pali and Rashid Miah are contesting in the polls from Awami League, Jatiya Party, Trinamool BNP and Ganamukti Jote respectively.

According to locals, as BNP is not participating in the election, the AL candidate is in a comfort zone.

The parliament secretariat on June 4 declared Chattoagram-10 constituency vacant following the demise of AL lawmaker Afsarul Amin.

Illegal dams disrupt farming

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Eight illegal dams, built for fish cultivation, have caused waterlogging in 500 acres of agricultural land in the Patuakhali Sadar upazila. As a result, Aman cultivation in the area has been disrupted.

A year ago, Al Amin Khan, Hanif Khan and Halim Khan, along with some other locals, blocked the one-kilometre-long canal which flows between West Hetalia and South Birajla villages of the Madarbania Union, and began their fishing operation.

Local farmers have sought immediate intervention from the upazila administration to remove these illegal dams.

Abdul Khalek Akon, a local farmer, said previously, water was being removed from the agricultural land of the area through the connecting canal. Now, due to the waterlogging, uncertainty has arisen over the Aman cultivation in the area.

"I made a written application to the Patuakhali Sadar UNO a month back, requesting to remove these



PHOTO: STAR

dams. But so far, there has been no solution," he added.

Md Farooq Biswas, another farmer from the village, said, "Due to the illegal fishing in the canal, our agricultural land gets submerged during the monsoons. If the water doesn't recede, we will not be able to cultivate Aman in the land."

Another farmer, Abdul Mannan Biswas, said action should be taken against those who cultivate fish by making dams in a flowing canal.

A local housewife in the area

noted that the canal water had become polluted due to the illegal fishing activities, which had stopped the flow of water. Now, the water can no longer be used for domestic purposes.

While visiting the area recently, this correspondent noticed that an area of the canal was blocked and made into a pond for fish cultivation. In another spot, some people have filled a part of the canal and built a cattle shed.

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