

NEWS

Faridpur, Rajbari fishers defy hilsa ban over aid delay

UNB, Faridpur

Defying the government ban on catching hilsa during the breeding season, many fishermen in Faridpur and Rajbari have continued fishing in the Padma River, citing delays in receiving government assistance and pressure to repay loans.

A visit to the riverbanks revealed a scene that hardly reflected a fishing ban; rather, it looked like a hilsa harvest festival.

Hundreds of fishermen were seen casting nets at more than 50 points along the Padma in both districts.



PHOTO: UNB

"Even though I hold a fisher's card, I haven't received any rice from the government this season," said Saifullah, a fisherman from Uttarchannel union in Faridpur. "We were promised 25-kilo rice, but those who got aid received no more than 20."

According to the Fisheries Department, a total of 8,012 registered fishermen in Faridpur and Rajbari depend directly on hilsa fishing, while at least another 5,000 rely on the trade for their livelihood.

Faridpur Senior Fisheries Officer Prashanta Kumar Sardar said, "We are conducting regular mobile court drives to ensure compliance with the government's ban on hilsa fishing. Legal action, including fines and imprisonment, is being taken against violators."

He also said efforts are underway to distribute the government's aid to all registered fishermen during the restriction period.

Low pressure likely to form over Bay on October 24

UNB, Dhaka

A low-pressure area is likely to form over the southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining area around October 24, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The Met office also predicted rain or thunder showers at one or two places over Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions.

The weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

Day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

A seasonal low lies over South Bay, extending its trough to North Bay.



Fishermen cast their nets in Dekar Haor of Sunamganj, but catches remain scarce. Once a haven for native fish, the haor has lost much of its abundance due to insufficient rain, unplanned dams, and plastic pollution that have disrupted fish breeding. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Floating fields of hope in Pirojpur marshlands

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

in the marshlands.

Like him, many traders buy saplings and vegetables from floating markets and distribute them across nearby upazilas.

Every week, farmers from different marshland villages come to wholesale floating markets by small boats filled

buyer busy loading his boat at Boithakata.

The marshy landscape stretches across parts of Nazirpur, Nesarabad, and Banaripara upazilas, where low-lying villages under Daulbari Dobra, Kolardoania, Malikhali, Boldia, Bisharkandi, and Iluhar

made of water hyacinth," he said, adding that the practice continues for six months from June. Heavy rains, like this year, reduce sapling demand and delay cultivation.

Alongside floating beds, farmers grow saplings and vegetables on slightly raised highlands inside the marshland, locally known as kandi.

"From September, when the water starts to fall, we begin cultivating winter vegetables on these kandis and get production in two to three months," said Chandu Mia from Umerpari village in Banaripara.

On the 120 to 250-yard-long kandi, they grow seasonal gourd, bitter gourd, cucumber, pumpkin, sweet gourd, leafy vegetables, and saplings.

Women also play a vital role. They help nurse saplings and harvest vegetables.

"During the sapling season, we help the men with the primary process," said Minara Begum. "And later care for the plants on the kandi."

Thousands of families across Pirojpur and Barishal depend on this centuries-old practice for their livelihoods. Amid waterlogged adversity, they have turned floating beds and kandis into fertile fields of hope.



with vegetables and saplings.

Boithakata, which sits on

Saturday and Tuesday, and Manoharpur, on Friday and Monday, are the largest.

"As the area stays underwater most of the year, we cannot grow anything on the ground," said Al Amin, a farmer from Mugarjhor village.

"But for more than a century, we have been producing vegetable saplings and vegetables on floating beds

unions remain submerged nearly eight months a year.

Traditional cultivation is nearly impossible there.

"For a long time, I've been collecting vegetable saplings from this market and transporting them to different parts of the country," said Sakhawat Hossain, a wholesale

farmer.

He also buys different varieties of vegetables produced

in the marshlands.

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