Hilsa fishing continues in Jamuna despite ban



PHOTO: ZAHIDUR RAHMAN UZZAL TALUKDER

Some fishers catch hilsa despite the ongoing 22-day government ban.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

Hilsa fishing continues in the Jamuna river in Jamalpur's Madarganj upazila despite the ongoing 22-day government ban, with the fish being sold openly at local markets, residents alleged.

The government imposed the ban from October 8 to 29 on catching, transporting, storing and selling hilsa to protect mature fish during the spawning season.

According to local sources, fishermen are catching hilsa using current nets and trap nets at several points along the Jamuna, including Manikdar, Jamathal and Dakatmara.

The fish is being sold for Tk 600-1,000 per kilogramme, depending on size, before being transported to wholesale markets in Madarganj and elsewhere.

Locals alleged that some traders buy the fish at night, mix it with other varieties and sell it at different markets.

Three fishermen, Robiul, Hamidur and Kaddus, said they were unaware of government assistance available during the ban and hence continued catching hilsa to support their families.

Meanwhile, a mobile court led by Madarganj UNO Sumon Chowdhury seized 20kg of hilsa from Balijuri Bazar on Tuesday night.

The seized fish was distributed to two orphanages, said Upazila Fisheries Officer Kamruzzaman. He said 600 metres of illegal current net had also been seized and destroyed during a recent drive.

UNO Sumon said drives would continue against illegal hilsa fishing and trading during the ban.

Mother, daughter killed in Ctg road accident



A mangled microbus after the accident. PHOTO: UNB

UNB, *Chattogram*

A woman and her daughter were killed and four others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Sitakunda upazila of Chattogram yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Rozy Akter, 55, wife of Najibur Rahman, and Nazma, 40, wife of Aslam Hossain.

The accident occurred around 8:30am in Barabkunda area when the Bandarban-bound microbus, carrying six people, crashed into an electricity pole as its driver lost control of the steering, leaving two dead on the spot and four others injured, said Md Aminuzzaman, sub-inspector of Baro Aulia Highway Police.

The microbus was badly mangled in the accident.

The injured were taken to Sitakunda Upazila Health Complex, from where they were referred to Chattogram Medical College and Hospital.

Three of a family burnt in Tongi gas cylinder blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

Three members of a family suffered severe burns after a gas cylinder leaked and exploded at a residence in the Cherag Ali area of Tongi in Gazipur early yesterday.

The victims were identified as Md Lalchan, 60, his wife Nasima Begum, 50, and their 16-year-old daughter Tanisa Akter, according to police.

Dr Sultan Mahmud Shikder, a resident physician at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka, said Lalchan suffered burns to 95 percent of his body, Nasima 85 percent and Tanisa 86 percent.

Their condition remains critical, said the doctor.

The explosion occurred around 6:00am yesterday, said Md Arifur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Tongi West Police Station.

The three were taken to the institute around 7:30am, said OC Arifur Rahman, adding that Lalchan and his wife work at a garment factory.





Monda, a traditional sweetmeat originating in Mymensingh's Muktagachha, is the country's 26th product to receive Geographical Identification (GI) status from the government.

PHOTO: STAR



MUKTAGACHHA'S MONDA

A 200-year-old sweet legacy

AMINUL ISLAM, *Mymensingh*

For more than two centuries, monda, a traditional sweetmeat originating in Mymensingh's Muktagachha, has remained a popular delicacy, with demand peaking during puja celebrations.

Devotees offer the sweetmeat as "bhog" at puja mandaps and serve it to guests at home during the festivities.

According to the book "Gopal Paul-er Prasiddha Monda Alekhya", Ram Gopal Paul (1799-1907), popularly known as Gopal Pal, first prepared monda in Muktagachha in 1824 and established a shop there.

The book, written by his late descendant Ramendranath Paul, says Gopal first offered the sweetmeat to Maharaja Suryakanta Acharya Chowdhury, a zamindar of Muktagachha.

Impressed by its taste, the zamindar appointed Gopal to prepare monda for guests at his palace and provided financial assistance to expand the business.

Ramendranath later continued the business under the name Ramendranath Paul and Brothers.

The shop is now run by Rabinranath Paul and other fifth-generation descendants of Gopal Paul.

A wooden sculpture of Gopal, carved by local carpenter Swarup Sutradhar some 124 years ago, is displayed in a glass showcase inside the shop, alongside the sweetmeat's original trademark.

Muktagachha's monda received Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2024, becoming Bangladesh's 26th GI product.

The sweetmeat has gained recognition across the subcontinent and beyond, attracting visitors throughout the year.

Over the years, prominent figures, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, classical music maestro Ustad Alauddin Khan, former West Bengal chief minister Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy and philanthropist Ranada Prasad Saha, have visited the shop.

Monda from Muktagachha was also served to then Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi and Britain's Queen Elizabeth during their visits to Dhaka.

The 1996 edition of "Bangladesh: A Lonely Planet Travel Survival Kit", written by Alex Newton, Betsy Wagenhauser and Jon Murray, also mentions the shop.

"The Rajbari (Muktagachha Rajbari) here draws the occasional visitors, but the town is best known throughout Bangladesh for its famous sweet shop Gopal Paul-er Prasiddha Monda," the book says, describing it as the country's best monda.

Dulal Das, the shop's manager, said they had no plans to open branches elsewhere to preserve the sweetmeat's reputation and authenticity.

He said regular monda sells for Tk 700 per kg (20 pieces), while the variety made with date molasses (nolen gur), available between November and March, costs Tk 800 per kg.

"We follow the original recipe to prepare the sweetmeat and make no compromise with the quality and our ethical business practice," said Rabindranath Paul, one of the owners.

"We select the best chhana (cheese curd) to prepare monda while maintaining hygiene strictly," he added.

Imtiaz Ahmed Tansen of the Mymensingh Regional Antiquities Protection Committee said, "Monda is a part of the history and tradition of Mymensingh region and we are proud that the sweetmeat still draws attention from home and abroad."

103 crude bombs recovered in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

A total of 103 crude bombs were recovered from an abandoned cement sack in Rajshahi city's Aduburi area early yesterday, said the Special Response Battalion (SRB).

An SRB-5 team recovered the bombs after receiving information around 2:00am that a suspicious sack had been left on the eastern side of a litchi orchard, said Lt Col Md Faisal Ishtiaq, commanding officer of SRB-5.

Of the bombs, 64 were wrapped in red cellophane tape and 39 in black tape, he said.

The recovered explosives were later handed over to Kashiadanga Police Station through a general diary entry for legal action.

An investigation is underway, and legal action will be taken against those involved, the SRB official added.



Attendants wheel a patient on a stretcher out of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as intern doctors begin a 24-hour work stoppage from 8:00am yesterday, pressing five point-demand, including an end to medical equipment shortages and improved security. The strike is disrupting services, forcing patients from distant areas and their relatives to leave the hospital. The photo was taken in front of the emergency department.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Three carriages of Karnaphuli train derail in Laksam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

Three carriages of the Dhaka-bound Karnaphuli Commuter derailed in Cumilla's Laksam upazila around 12:30pm yesterday, disrupting train movement on one line of the Dhaka-Chattogram route.

Rajib Chandra Kar, officer-in-charge of Laksam Railway Police Station, said the derailment partially damaged the track. Services on the other line remained operational.

No casualties were immediately reported, though several passengers reportedly sustained minor injuries.

A rescue train reached the scene around 5:00pm to assist with the recovery operation. However, no derailed carriage had been removed by 8:15pm, the OC said.

A railway rescue team was working to clear the line and facilitate repairs, he added.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The Karnaphuli Commuter derails in Laksam, Cumilla, disrupting train movement on one line.