

Sinking B'deshi vessel dumps toxic fly ash in river near Ghoramara, shows video shared by panchayat member

Monotosh Chakraborty | TNN

Kolkata: A video shared by a panchayat member from Ghoramara island on Sunday shows a sinking Bangladeshi vessel illegally dumping toxic fly ash into the Muriganga river, raising serious environmental concerns.

According to reports, the vessel, MV Sea World, was en route to Bangladesh when it struck a sandbar near Ghoramara, causing a fracture in its hull. Over the past 72 hours, the damage worsened, with nearly 70% of the vessel compromised. Officials initially instructed that the ship be towed back to Bangladesh before the fly ash could mix with the water, but no significant action was taken by the Bang-

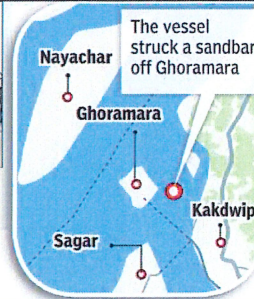
GREEN CONCERN OVER HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

- **Toxic leaching:** Contaminates water and harms aquatic life
- **Sedimentation:** Smothers riverbed organisms
- **pH changes:** Affects sensitive species
- **Aquatic life impact:** Harms fish and other organisms
- **Soil contamination:** Affects soil and groundwater
- **Proper Disposal:** Fly ash should be properly disposed



The sinking Bangladeshi vessel off Ghoramara island

of in lined landfills or utilised in applications like concrete production



The vessel struck a sandbar off Ghoramara

ladeshi shipping agency.

Instead, locals and fishermen alleged that the vessel's crew, under the cover of darkness and isolation, deliberately discharged fly ash into the river — using machines

— to dilute the toxic material with water and release it into the aquatic ecosystem. "A second vessel and two boats arrived at the scene, accelerating the unloading process to lighten the damaged ship and

tow it away," said Sanjib Sagar, Ghoramara panchayat upa-pradhan.

Experts warned that fly ash contains arsenic, mercury, cadmium and lead, which can contaminate river water,

disrupt aquatic life, and enter the human food chain through fish consumption. "Fly ash leaching into the river can alter water chemistry, increase toxicity, and pose severe health risks," said Tuhin Ghosh, director, School of Oceanographic Studies at Jadavpur University. He further warned that this contamination could impact groundwater, soil quality, and biodiversity, with long-term ecological consequences.

The minister for Sundarbans affairs, Bankim Hazra, said: "I will visit the site tomorrow to investigate the situation. I went there on the first day after the incident occurred. The additional SP and BDO were also present."

➤ **Marginal fishermen, P 2**

'Marginal fishermen may suffer the most'



The sinking Bangladeshi vessel

➤ **Continued from P 1**

The minister for Sundarbans affairs, Bankim Hazra, said: "Twelve crew members of the sinking Bangladeshi vessel had been rescued after it hit the sandbar. If fly ash is indeed being dumped into the river, it is extremely dangerous."

Local fishermen, who depend on Muriganga's rich fish population, fear a devastating impact. Bijon Maity, secretary of the Fishermen's Association in Kakdwip, expressed grave concerns: "If the experts confirm that heavy metals are contaminating the water, marginal fishermen will suffer the most. This region is a prime fishing zone for high-value species like tope, bhola, bhетки, prawns and farsa. The affected area supports thou-

sands of small-scale fishermen from Sagar, Ghoramara, Kakdwip, Haldia, Nandigram and Khejuri."

Ghoramara panchayat head Ambiya Khatun Bibi also acknowledged receiving similar complaints from local fishermen. This is not the first such incident in the region. Experts and environmentalists stress the need for strict monitoring, regulatory protocols, and enforcement to prevent further contamination. There are also calls for stringent action against the Bangladeshi shipping agency responsible for the vessel.

Authorities have been urged to conduct immediate water testing and implement a proper safety framework to protect the river ecosystem, groundwater, and public health from toxic exposure.