

Huge fish resources in Bay untapped

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Absence of necessary policy is hindering proper management, expansion and exploration of marine resources in the vast 1.66 lakh square kilometre area of the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh territory.

The vast ground of marine resources, which provides around 92 per cent of the annual export of fishes, are yet to be properly surveyed, managed and explored, sources said.

No remarkable survey could be done on the 1.40 lakh square km area identified as the "Exclusive Economic Zone" in the Bay of Bengal since the liberation, they said.

As such the fishing area could not be expanded there and remained confined to only four specific "fishing grounds", said the experts. "It also created scope for illegal fishing in the Bay of Bengal by the outsiders," they added.

They said a separate and independent department is needed to protect the marine fisheries.

There are about 511 species of

fishes, including 36 species of shrimps in the marine fishing ground in Bangladesh territory against some 260 species of mild water fishes, sources said.

Of them, at best 30 species of fishes are collected, which comprises around 25 per cent of the possible stock of fishes in the Bay, they said.

Lack of management hampered proper exploration of the marine resources while unchecked fishing and rampant collection of fish fries caused a decrease in productivity of marine fisheries alarmingly, they added.

At present some 121 trawlers, 42 for shrimps and 79 for other fishes, and 21,400 fishing boats have been engaged in commercial collection of fishes in the Bay.

Many of the fishing boats have no license and are fishing on the continental shelf, even during the spawning season, said the sources.

But nothing could be done to check this menace or develop the marine fisheries, they said blaming institutional weakness and absence of required policy in this regard.

Moreover, there were 170

types of duckweed, lichen and algae, which are consumed as food in the Bay of Bengal under the country's territory. Cultivation and export of Hypnea sp., Caulerpa, Mollusc like Green Mussel (*Perna Viridis*) *Crassostrea* sp. and *Meretrix meretrix* could enrich the country's economy immensely, they said.

But, there is no measure for developing, managing or collecting these seafoods, they added.

They said over 1,000 tons of Hypnea sp. collected from Saint Martin Island in Cox's Bazar are being exported to the neighbouring countries.

Apart from this, there is also a huge stock of oyster, cockle and bivalve mollusc, which remained almost unnoticed, said the researchers and the experts.

Chittagong University Institute of Marine Science Director Prof Mohammad Zafar said future of the potential marine fisheries is bleak unless a separate department can be set up.

"Fisheries is the principal staff of the marine resources we have in a huge water territory, which is even larger than the land area of the country," he said.

"But unfortunately marine fisheries is yet to be evaluated," he added.

"An initiative was taken to establish marine fisheries department last year and a project profile was also prepared. But, the move could not proceed much due to a narrow regional sentiment by a section of high-ups in the government," Prof Zafar said.

Meanwhile, time for preparing an organogram for separate marine fisheries was extended for further two months, he said. But uncertainty remains as the person, entrusted with the task, would retire by then.

The expert and researchers at a workshop organised by the Department of Marine Fisheries here recently called for setting up a separate department of marine fisheries.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman in his speech as the chief guest also underscored the need for such a department for proper management and exploration of marine resources that could create a huge employment opportunity and enrich the economy further.



Saint Martin, a coral island in the Bay of Bengal, is enriched with a huge stock of duckweeds like Hypnea sp., Caulerpa, and Mollusc like Green Mussel (*Perna Viridis*) *Crassostrea* Sp. and *Meretrix meretrix*.

Move to modernise lone seismic centre

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

The government has taken initiatives to modernise the country's lone seismic observatory centre as it is unable to identify the epicentre of the earthquake properly.

The renovation of the lone observatory centre at Ambagan area in the city will start soon, said Mohammed Momenul Islam, a meteorologist at the centre.

The seismic observatory centre in Chittagong has been functioning manually since its installation in 1954.

When any earthquake occurs, the seismologists in the centre manually calculate its



Seismographs used to measure earthquake are seen in the seismic observatory centre at Ambagan.

duration, distance and magnitude through analysis of responses from the seismograph and the seismometer installed there.

In absence of sufficient number of observatories, it could not be possible to identify the direction of the epicentre so far, said Samsuddin Ahmed, a meteorologist of Meteorology and Geo-Physical Centre at Agrabad. He said with a single observatory centre, it is not possible to identify the epicentre of the earthquake.

Meanwhile, construction of three other seismic observatories in Dhaka, Sylhet and Rangpur is going on in full swing.

It needs at least three centres to find out the accurate location

of the epicentre of any earthquake, sources said.

After completion of the construction and installations of equipment in the new centres in Dhaka, Sylhet and Rangpur as well as modernisation of Ambagan centre, all the four will work under a single network, sources said.

If earthquake occurs, all the data from three other centres would be sent to Dhaka for analysis.

The analysis of the data will help find out the accurate magnitude, duration and the epicentre of any earthquake, they said.

The newly built centres with computerised seismic system will help us find records and

seismic data easily to provide information required for building construction, urban planning and mining purpose, said Shamsuddin.

Analysis of the previous records showed that with the country situated on the Indo-Australian Plate, many of its areas in Sylhet and Chittagong are in the high-risk zone of earthquake.

As the earthquake can not be forecast, sufficient data and records available from the four observatory centres will surely help the people of the high risk areas to take necessary precaution to avert destruction due to earthquake, they said.

A total of nine earthquakes

were recorded in the observatory in Chittagong this year. Of them, one with the highest magnitude of 5.9 on Richter scale was recorded on February 14. It had its epicentre some 619 kilometres off the observatory centre in the port city, sources at the observatory centre said.

The Chittagong Seismic Observatory started its journey in the Met Office at Patenga in 1954. Later, it was shifted to Zakir Hossain Road at Nasirabad in 1957 before the final shifting at its present location at Ambagan, around 35 metres above the sea level in 1961, said the sources.

theweekthatwas

Name Shankha Bridge after Prof Ashab

Speakers at a meeting urged the authorities concerned to name the Shankha Bridge and the road beside the Govt City College in the city after eminent litterateur and politician Prof Ashab Uddin

Ahmed. They made the demand at a memorial meeting in observance of the 12th death anniversary of Prof Ashab at the Chittagong Zila Parishad auditorium on Friday.

Maulana Bhasani Foundation organised the meeting with foundation President Siddiqui Islam in the chair.

Dhaka University (DU) Bengali Department Chairman Prof Abul Kasem

Fazul Hoque, eminent scientist Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, Prof Saiful Chittagong University, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) leader Rakezzaman Ratan, Advocate Kafiluddin Chowdhury, Advocate Bhulan Bhumik, Raja Mia and Hasan Maruf Rumi addressed the meeting.

The speakers recalled the contribution of Prof Ashab in the historic language movement in 1952 and paid rich tribute to him.

Tree fair ends

State Minister for Environment and Forests Jafrul Islam Chowdhury said the government has taken the decision to plant one crore of Nim plants side by side other forest-grown fruit and medicinal plants in order to develop the local medicine industry.

He was addressing as the chief guest the closing ceremony of the month-long tree fair organised by Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) on the Chittagong MA Aziz Stadium Gymnasium premises on Thursday.

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury presided over the ceremony while Premier University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Anwarul Azim Arif, Chittagong University Forestry and Environmental Science Director Dr Shafiqul Alam and Mamta Uddin Ahmad were present as special guests.

Jafrul Islam emphasised producing medicinal plants in order to making available the medicines at local medical stores.

He urged all to come forward to help build up an environment-friendly city.

Adulteration in foods

A report of Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR) confirmed the adulteration in

the raw materials and food items seized from two bakeries in the port city during anti-adulteration drives, sources at Chittagong Port magistracy said on Thursday.

Sources said, the food items seized from Muslim Bakery of Port Connecting Road and B-Baria Bakery of Halishahar area were sent to the BCSIR laboratory. The two bakeries were doing business without BSTI licence for long.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Munir Chowdhury fined the two bakeries during the drives.

Ctg Dist Nirmul body executives

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Central Committee approved a 45-member Chittagong district executive committee for the year 2006-07 on Wednesday.

Former Chittagong University Teachers' Association (Cuta) general secretary Helal Uddin Nazami, writer Showkat Bangali and Chittagong University Anthropology Department teacher Muhammad Alauddin were elected president, general secretary and organising secretary.

Other office-bearers are Senior Vice President: Engineer Delwar Majumder, Vice Presidents: Advocate Dipak Dutta, Dr Muhammad Sharif, Mafizur Rahman and Prof Delwar Hossain, Assistant General Secretary: Mahbubur Rahman, Assistant Organising Secretary: Monjur Hossain Chowdhury, Treasurer: Javedul Azam Masud, Publicity and Publication Secretary: Dr Biddut Barua, Information and Research Secretary: Mintu Chowdhury and Office Secretary: Amitabh Sen.

AKTEL-Drishy

debate concludes

The six-day long Aktel-Drishy Debate Championship-2006 concluded here at Shilpakala Academy on Thursday.

Bangladesh Mahila Samity High School, Chittagong Government College and Stamford University became champions in the school, college and university groups.

Sixteen schools, eight colleges and eight universities participated in the debate.

Former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) Anisul Haque was present as the chief guest in the prize giving ceremony while former

president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCI) Farid Ahmed Chowdhury and Assistant Editor of Daily Prothom Alo Biswajit Chowdhury were the special guests.

Principal of Sunshine Grammar School Safia Ghazi Rahman, Biswajit Pal of Aktel and Drishy President Masud Bakul were present.

Later, the guests distributed prizes among the winners.

Adhunik CMC unit gets gold

Adhunik (Amra Dhuman Nibaran Kori), Chittagong Medical College unit got gold medal for its outstanding contribution to the anti-smoking campaign in 2006.

The central committee of Adhunik, an organisation fighting against smoking, gave the award.

Adhunik CMC unit convener Prof Dr Abdul Aziz, also a teacher of the college, received the award from Health Minister Dr Khondaker Mosharrat Hossain.

Earlier, Adhunik, CMC unit also got gold medal in 1996 and Certificate of Honour in 2002.

Reception to students

Power Development Board (PDB) Officers' Colony Welfare Association and the Colony Ladies' Club jointly accorded a reception to the students, who passed SSC examinations, at the Colony Tennis

Ground at Jamal Khan on Friday.

The students are children of PDB officials, engineers and staffs. PDB Chief Engineer AHM Aminul Islam was present as the chief guest at the ceremony with Ladies' Club President Rehana Islam in the chair.

Nine students - Faria Islam, Samira Afroza Rahman, Antara Mehrab Arif, SM Ashiqur Rahman, Rafiya Rafiq, Ahmed Tahmid, Saqibur Rahman, Eraz Ahmed Siddique and Sabnam Mushtari - were accorded reception.

Later, the chief guest distributed crests among the students.

The association secretary Kajal Kanti Chowdhury, Ladies' Club Secretary Nasrin Taher, Superintendent Engineer Osuir Rahman and Antara Mehrab Arif spoke at the function.



Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, also president of Chittagong city Awami League, offers a piece of cake to ruling party Whip Syed Wahidul Alam MP at a function of ATN Bangla on Saturday. The function was organised by the ATN Bangla Chittagong office at Chittagong Press Club to mark ten years of the private TV channel.



Winners of Aktel-rishy Debate Competition pose for photograph with the guests at Chittagong Shilpakala Academy on Thursday.