

10 shrimp hatcheries closed in Cox's Bazar

Indiscriminate catching of mother shrimp blamed

MUAZEM HOSSAIN SHAKIL, Cox's Bazar

At least 10 hatcheries have been closed here due to acute crisis of shrimp fry.

The crisis has been created following indiscriminate fishing of mother shrimp in the Bay of Bengal. About 50 trawlings (ships to catch fish) have intruded into the territorial waters of Bangladesh from India, Myanmar and Thailand. The trawlings are catching mother shrimps from the Bay of Bengal indiscriminately. But the concerned authorities are indifferent to check the menace. Besides, there is no official policy regarding catching of mother shrimp at Bay.

Khorshed Alam, a shrimp hatchery owner, said at present fry are produced in hatcheries by catching tender aged mother shrimp. As a result, most of the fry become weak and are prone to virus attack resulting in their early death. The crisis prevails here for the last three years, Alam said. Not only this, but an acute crisis of various species of sea fishes is prevailing following indiscriminate fishing of mother shrimp and sea fishes.

Cox's Bazar Shrimp Hatchery Owners Association officials said 10 out of 58 hatcheries set up along the seacoast by spending crores of taka have been closed because of the

phenomenon. The rest hatcheries are in a pitiable condition, he said. Many owners are thinking to close down their hatcheries apprehending loss.

Sources in the Shrimp Hatchery Association of Bangladesh said shrimp enclosures were set up on one and a half lakh hectares of land across the country. Fry are supplied to the enclosures from the hatcheries in Cox's Bazar.

Usually, mother shrimps lay eggs during the period from January to March. Fishing in Bay is officially prohibited at that time, but the order is defied.

Over 100 trawlings of four fisheries region of Cox's Bazar, Kutubdia, Saint Martins, Noakhali and Khulna including various species of fish including mother shrimps from the sea. Of them, 49 trawlings belong to Bangladesh while over 50 trawlings come from Myanmar, India and Thailand. Not only that the trawlings also catch shark and tortoise in deep sea, usually about 150 kilometre off the coast.

Mostafizur Rahman, owner of Niribili Hatchery, the biggest hatchery in Cox's Bazar said mother shrimps are missing due to unrestrained fishing throughout the year. It also causes environmental degradation which is the cause of diras attacks, he said.

Shrimp cultivators are incurring losses due to release of weak and virus affected fry in their enclosures. Shrimps worth crores of taka were damaged in the district recently following attack of virus.

Hatchery owners are now in a miserable condition, said Bangladesh Shrimp Hatchery Association president Lutfur Rahman Kazal. This is mainly due to indiscriminate fishing of mother shrimps, he said.

He said sea fish is likely to extinct within two or three years if its indiscriminate catching is not halted without further delay, he said. This will pose a real threat to the hatchery industry. Even two years ago, a mother shrimp was available at between Tk 600-700, but now its price is Tk 4,000. On average 4,000 metric tons of mother shrimps are caught annually from four fisheries region of Bay, said Swapon Chandra Pal, an official of Cox's Bazar Sea Survey, Management and Development Project.

Mother shrimps which are alive are usually sold to different hatcheries at a higher price and dead shrimps are smuggled abroad after being frozen.

Cox's Bazar Shrimp Fry Traders' Cooperative Association president Nur Mohammad said mother shrimps lay about one crore 20 lakh

eggs in sea alternately every eight months. But mother shrimps aged 4 to 5 months are sold to hatcheries. Over half of the eggs are damaged because mother shrimps lay eggs before attainment of maturity by producing 50,000 fry only.

District fisheries officer M Kabir Ahmed said at present 49 trawlings are catching fish in the sea. Six of them are duly approved by the government, he said.

During the breeding season, catching of shrimp and other fishes is prohibited, but it is ignored most often, he said. There should be a clear cut law regarding catching of shrimp, he said. Even two years ago a trawling used to catch, on average, 250 mother shrimps but now it catches only 20 to 25 shrimps in each trip, he said. Because of catching of weak mother shrimps, produced fry die in enclosures after being affected by virus causing loss to shrimp cultivators, he added.

Although the government earns at least Tk 200 crore in foreign exchange from this sector every year, but no effective measures are taken to protect mother shrimps at Bay, said shrimp cultivators.

5 JMB men held in Natore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police arrested five militants of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Bariahati village of Naldanga thana in Natore in the early hours of yesterday.

On a tip-off, a police team caught Akhtaruzzaman Babu, 23, Rafiqul Islam, 32, Anisur Rahman, 25, Faruq, 38, and Uzzal, 27, following a raid conducted at the village.

Police said, the militants were trying to re-organise themselves.

Nasaka abducts 3 Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three Bangladesh nationals were abducted by Myanmar border security force members, Nasaka, from Husaidia along the Naaf river in Hoikong union of Teknaf upazila yesterday. Their boat was also seized.

Abducted Faridul Alam, 34, Shabuddin, 40, and Mokter Hossain, 38, are labourers of a shrimp project in Hoikong. They were abducted while going to Tenaf by boat.

Teknaf Police said Nasaka intruded into Bangladesh territory and shot several gunshots before abducting the Bangladeshis. Nasaka took them to Dheki Bonia Camp in Myanmar.

Earlier, Nasaka abducted two Bangladeshi fishermen on Sunday.

Production at Barapukuria suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Production at 250-megawatt Barapukuria Power Plant remained suspended since Wednesday after it tripped again due to technical fault resulting in massive power outage in the region, said officials in the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).

However, the BPDB officials said the plant was shut down for routine maintenance work. Plant sources said it would need at least 10 more days to go into production in one of units.

The plant was set up under a supplier's credit of over US 250 million dollar. But the plant tripped for over 15 times since February last allegedly due to sub-standard machinery supplied by the Chinese company, CMC.

CMC was supposed to keep maintenance of the plant for two years as per an agreement. But plant sources alleged that its operation and maintenance are hampered due to non-cooperation of CMC with BPDB as well as its non-compliance of the contract.

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Tangail Jubo Dal burns copies of Janakantha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Jubo Dal leaders on Monday burnt all the copies of The Daily Janakantha here for publishing what they said 'false and fabricated reports' against State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad.

They also threatened a newspaper agent to burn his bookstall if he distributes again Janakantha among the readers, witnesses said.

Earlier, Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal leaders, at a meeting on Sunday, declared the Daily Prothom Alo and Janakantha correspondents persona non-grata.

Prothom Alo and Janakantha recently carried stories against the state minister narrating that he had bought land of the Islamic Trade and Commerce Limited (ITCL) at a nominal price.

Youth Day observed in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Speakers at a discussion here have demanded a drug free society to make youths good citizens.

SSIT Foundation, a local educational organisation, organised the discussion at Alauddin Auditorium here to mark the International Youth Day on Saturday.

North-South School principal Md Mubarak Ali Khadem presided the discussion while it was attended by Brahmanbaria Government College ex-principal Prof Abdun Noor as chief guest.

Speakers said the children should be reared in such a way so that they can be good citizens as well as future leaders. They said that parents should watch their children as drug is available everywhere.

Not only that, they should keep watchful eyes on their children's friends also, speakers said.



Processionists parade a city street in Barisal. Awami League brought out the procession yesterday condemning a foiled bid to kill party chief Sheikh Hasina at Bangabandhu Museum in Dhaka Tuesday.

Stranded Pakistanis in Syedpur made voters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Hundreds of stranded Pakistanis are being made voters outside 22 Geneva camps in Syedpur.

This is being done following an instruction to voter enumerators (assisting officers) from the district election office asking them to make them voters for avoiding 'controversy'.

Ruling BNP men have made special arrangements to give stranded Pakistanis the fake identity of permanent citizenship of Bangladesh.

For the first time, the stranded Pakistanis of Syedpur have applied to the Deputy Commissioner of Nilphamari to make them voters. They threatened a legal action if their demands are not met.

Sarkar Kabiruddin, a commissioner of Ward No 13 of Syedpur Poursabha has alleged that at least 250 stranded Pakistanis have been made voters in his ward in a week. He said although the 'assisting officers' are not going to Geneva camps but a local BNP leader, Mostofa Kamal, is encouraging the stranded Pakistanis of Bansbari Camp No-2 in his area to become

voters after coming out of the camp.

He managed to make them voters stating their permanent citizens of Bangladesh, Kabir said. He said he would lodge a complaint to the Election Commission to exclude their names from voter list.

Another commissioner, Batu Sarker also said that many stranded Pakistanis of Golahat camp have become voters.

On contact, Syedpur Poursabha chairman Akhtar Hossain Badal has confirmed that he had received complaints of making many stranded Pakistanis voters. He said if the process goes on unabated, at least 25,000 stranded Pakistanis would become voters.

Moreover, names of 10,000 stranded Pakistanis who were enrolled illegally in 2000 are yet to be omitted from voter list, he said. He blamed BNP lawmaker Amzad Hossain for the malpractice.

According to an official record, about 60,000 stranded Pakistanis live in 22 Geneva camps in Syedpur. At present, most of them live outside the camps and doing jobs in the railway town. Only 3,000 families having 20,000 members live in the

camps now.

Opposition party sources said most of the stranded Pakistanis have become voters hiding their real identity.

Many assisting officers in Bansbari, Golahat, Islambag, Kazihat and other areas have alleged that the ruling party workers threatened them of dire consequences if they do not make stranded Pakistanis voters.

However, the Stranded Pakistanis Youth Rehabilitation Committee (SPYRC) general secretary Abdul Qaiyum refuted the allegations saying not a single member of his community was made voters.

Marufur Rahman, In-Charge of the Election Office has admitted that some members of stranded Pakistanis might have been made voters showing nationality certificate or permanent citizenship of Bangladesh.

He, however, said if any specific allegation is brought challenging it and if the allegations are proved to be true, the stranded Pakistanis will be dropped from voter list.

Flood, high tide damage roads in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Twenty major roads in Patuakhali Poursabha area stretching about 55 kilometre (KM) have become unfit for use following flood and recurring high tide recently.

But, the Poura authorities are unable to repair the roads due to fund crisis.

The damaged roads include Hospital Road, Zia Sarak, Muktiyoddha Sarak, Vocational Institute Sarak, Government Girls' School Road, Tulatala Road and Town Joinkathi Road.

A Poursabha Engineering Department official said about one lakh inhabitants, specially school children, are suffering a lot as many potholes have developed on the roads resulting in accumulation of rainwater and tidal water.

On contact, Poursabha chairman Moshtaq Ahmed said, 'We have sent letters to the Ministry of Local Government for allocation of fund amounting to Tk 2 crore to repair the roads.' The repair work will begin after disbursement of fund, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Flood damaged General Hospital Road in Patuakhali. The Poursabha authorities are unable to repair it due to fund crisis.

10 BNP activists hurt in attack by AL workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least 10 BNP activists were injured, three of them critically, following attack on them by Awami League (AL) activists at Shantipur in Matiranga upazila on Tuesday night.

Police and local people said, the AL activists attacked them with sticks while they were returning from a meeting at Matiranga.

Critically injured Jamal Uddin, 35, Kamal Uddin, 42 and Dilu Mia, 35, were sent in Chittagong Medical College Hospital immediately after the incident.

Other injured Siru Mia, 40, Zahangir, 29, Alam, 29, Abdur Rahim, 30, Nurul Islam, 32, and Kalamia, 45, were released after giving first aid.

Matiranga upazila BNP president Abdul Mannan Munnaap said the AL activists attacked and injured their innocent men.

However, Matiranga AL president Abul Kashem refuted the allegations saying his party men were not involved in the incident.

Tk 47,560 urea seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday seized 4,756 kilogram (KG) of urea worth Tk 47,560 while being smuggled out to Myanmar through Bethboniya point of Teknaf border in Cox's Bazar. But none was arrested in this connection.

Smuggling of urea through Ukhiya and Teknaf is a common phenomenon here. This has created an acute scarcity of urea resulting in its high price at local markets, BDR officials said.

A 50 kg bag of urea is now being sold at between Tk 550 to 600 in different markets here against the government fixed price of Tk 280, traders and farmers said.

Hindu family passing days in panic in Pabna

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Members of a Hindu family are passing their days in panic following an armed robbery at Majhdia village of Shara union in Ishwardi upazila on August 8 midnight.

Police and local people said a gang of robbers attacked the house of Bimol Chowdhury and looted gold ornaments, colour television, mobile sets and other valuables worth Tk 1 lakh. The robbers beat and chopped the family members with sharp weapons. Of them, Bimol and Konika were injured critically.

A case was filed with Ishwardi Police Station the next day without naming anyone. Two persons were arrested on suspicion. They are Liton, son of Banu Mollah of Majhdia village and Aroj Ali Sarder, son of Mofiz Uddin of Piarpur Chandmari village under Ishwardi upazila. On contact, Sub-Inspector Md Kamruzzaman who is investigating

the case said the arrested have confessed to their involvement in the incident.

However, he did not disclose further 'for the interest of the case.'

After visiting the spot, this correspondent came to know that the incident was not only case of a robbery, rather a heinous conspiracy of influential people to grab land and property of Bimol as his family is the lone Hindu family in the village.

The family members did not disclose the names of culprits to this correspondent due to insecurity of life.

'We are passing days in panic because unidentified enemies are threatening us,' said Konika. A relative of the victim's family told this correspondent on condition of anonymity that it was a planned robbery aimed at making them frightened. They sought police protection as they are apprehending fresh attacks.

Pabna superintendent of police (SP) visited the spot on Saturday.

UPDF protest meeting held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) yesterday brought out a procession and held a protest meeting at Ehenghi Square here demanding stoppage of oppression by security personnel at Kamal Chhari and Buyachhari in Sadar upazila.

Pahari Chhartra Parishad (PCP) secretary Sunimol Chakma presided the meeting.

Among others, Hill Women's Association organising secretary Konika Chakma, UPDF treasurer Michael Chakma and its member Brata Chakma addressed.

Body of college student found in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Kotwali Police here recovered the body of a college student from a jungle near his house at Chabagia in Sadar upazila.

The victim, Kawсар Hossain Polen, 17, son of Abul Hossain was a first year student of Mymensingh Polytechnic Institute.

Police and victims' family sources said Polen had a love affair with Mini, daughter of Azizul Haque, a neighbour, who was reluctant to recognise their love. He also threatened Polen of dire consequences.

In such a situation, Polen went out of his house to attend a marriage ceremony of his friend Montu at Bailor in Trishal upazila last Friday. But he did not return home.

Security at Syedpur Airport tightened

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Security in and around Syedpur Airport has been tightened.

The measure has been taken following detection of sabotage plot abroad recently.

Syedpur Airport manager Abul Kashem A H Talukdar said the Civil Aviation Authority security personnel have been kept on high alert. Additional police forces have also been deployed at all the airport establishments, he said.

Airport sources further said various government intelligence agencies have intensified their

surveillance. Passengers' luggages are being thoroughly checked with metal detectors. Movement of visitors at the airport has been restricted.

Syedpur Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Lutfur Rahman has confirmed deployment of additional police forces at the airport at the instruction of the higher authorities. Police patrol has been intensified in the surrounding areas of the airport, he added.

Meanwhile, security has also been tightened at all inter-city and local trains as well as in all big railway junctions of the Bangladesh Railway (BR) western zone. 1



Women collect waste polythene near a warehouse for use at a recycle plant in Dinajpur.

PHOTO: STAR