

Fish processing units becoming 'sick'

By Staff Correspondent

The fish processing factories of the country are facing an acute shortage of fish. There are 107 fish processing factories in the country, mainly in Chittagong and Khulna. Of these, only 8 to 10 are still operating while the rest are becoming sick," Manzur Ahmed, secretary-general of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association, said.

He said, the country's processing plants have a total annual capacity of about 1,90,000 metric tonnes, but only 20-22 thousand tonnes of fish are processed every year.

Another leader of the association and a leading shrimp exporter of the country alleged that due to shortage of adequate supply of quality fish some factories are mis-grading their processed shrimps, thereby eroding Bangladesh's credibility among foreign buyers.

"Earlier, Japan was one of the biggest shrimp importers from Bangladesh. But now, they are not interested to import from here. Rather, they prefer India although the price is higher there", he added.

Demanding punitive actions against those who are engaged in mis-grading, he told The Daily Star. "Otherwise, the country will lose its shrimp export markets."

A high official of the Ministry of Commerce said, shrimp cultivation was recognised as an industry in the investment schedule under the Second Five-Year Plan and the production target of shrimp was fixed at three crore pounds for the 1980-85 period. Those factories were established to fulfil that target. But the subsequent governments did not give proper attention to the development of this sector. So, shrimp production did not increase and a number of processing factories have become inoperative, he added.

Bangladesh exported frozen food worth Tk 921 crore in the last fiscal year. The major countries importing Bangladesh frozen food are the USA, Canada and the European countries. Recently, Australia, Malaysia and Singapore have started importing frozen food from Bangladesh.

N Korea rejects South's N-reactor offer

SEOUL, Aug 28: North Korea has rejected a South Korean offer of a billion-dollar modern nuclear reactor, endangering a deal to resolve suspicions over the Communist country's nuclear programme, Seoul officials said Sunday.

The provision of light-water reactors is a key part of a package deal struck between the United States and North Korea earlier this month to clear suspicions that the North is developing nuclear weapons.

In radio reports monitored in Seoul and Tokyo Saturday night the North indicated that its rejection of the Southern offer is political rather than economic, officials said.

"The issue of the provision of the light-water reactor, is a matter that must be settled between the DPRK (North Korea) and the United States, which does not allow the South Korean authorities to obtrusively interfere," the North's official radio said in a report monitored in Seoul.

The North's official Korea Central News Agency carried similar reports, monitored in Tokyo.

North Korea said it had discussed light-water reactors in detail with the United States in Geneva earlier this month but "no need was paid to the South Korean reactor."

The Geneva deal calls for the United States to give the North modern reactors and some form of diplomatic recognition in exchange for Pyongyang's promise to freeze its nuclear programme, suspected of being used to make atomic bombs.

Women more keen

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of her going to the adult literacy centre. Tahmina replied "I have already learnt that drinking water other than tubewell may harm my health."

Mohiuddin Mia of Jagatbar has let the yard of his house be used as a literacy centre. Both he and his wife — Hafiza — are working as supervisors of the mass literacy programme in their area. "I'll share the pride when the people of my area will be 100 per cent literate," Mohiuddin said. "Sometimes my household activities are affected but I never felt irritated," Hafiza said.

Chairman of Dahagram Union Parishad Md. Tariqul Haq Sarkar told The Daily Star that he along with the UP members was regularly campaigning door-to-door and motivating people to come to the literacy centres. "Majority of them are now coming and we are trying to persuade the others to come," he said.

Kamrun accompanied by her two daughters — Sabera and Jamila — was attending a female literacy centre set up at the Poura Prathamik Bidyalaya in Lalmonirhat town Thursday afternoon. Kamrun had started sending her daughters to primary school soon after she herself became a learner. Until then, she felt little the need for education for her children, Kamrun admitted.

Farida, wife of a vegetable seller — Julhas — had dream of learning how to read and write since her girlhood. But her dream remained unfulfilled. And now her dream is becoming a reality because she goes to another centre under the

Poura Prathamik Bidyalaya with the consent of her husband. A smiling Farida said she takes help from her daughter Julieka, a student of class II, while studying at home. "Now I can read simple sentences and write my name."

A former high school teacher, Hosne Ara is now teaching the illiterate people at a centre in the town with a feeling of serving the humanity. Abul Kalam who had passed HSC, is also teaching voluntarily at a slum centre in the town. Failing to manage a job, Kalam pulls rickshaw in the day and teaches at the centre at night.

Literacy centres have also been opened at the slums in the town. Sukhjan, a maid servant, is a learner at such a centre. "I will form an association of the slum dwellers after completing the literacy course," she said.

The mass literacy drive in the district has created enthusiasm among the illiterate people and a feeling among the privileged section to carry out their social responsibilities.

Visiting different areas of the district, The Daily Star correspondent got this impression.

There was no incident of giving 'fatwa' as regards women coming out of their houses and attending classes because the religious leaders were also involved in the drive.

Women were more interested in having basic literacy and accordingly the organisers have set up more centres for them. A total of 15,990 women are attending 533 centres against 12,780 men at 420 centres in the district.

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Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina consoling some family members of the August 20 launch capsize victims during her visit to Chandpur yesterday.

Hasina

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tating cyclone in Chittagong. But on each occasion, the government utterly failed to protect the lives and property of the people, she blamed.

This government is not competent and can't bring any wellbeing for the people, the Opposition leader observed.

Hasina demanded adequate compensation to the families of the Chandpur launch victims.

The condolence meeting, organised by Chandpur district Awami League, was also addressed by Abdul Mannan, Col (Rtd) Sawkat Ali MP, Begum Matia Chowdhury MP, Shamsur Rahman Khan Shajahan, Ashiqueur Rahman, Abdul Awal and Mohammad Shahfiquah.

Hasina after seeing the accident spot visited the graveyard where some unidentified victims were buried and offered *jateha* there.

8 journalists get bail in Pabna

PABNA, Aug 28: Eight journalists were today granted bail by Pabna Sadar magistrate's court in a defamation case, reports UNB.

Mirza Shamsul Islam filed the defamation case against 15 journalists, including seven editors of Dhaka a few days ago.

The journalists who were granted bail are: UNB correspondent Abul Kalam, Danik Janakantha correspondent Mirza Azad, Danik Sangram correspondent Abdul Majid Dudu, President of Pabna Press Club Yasin Ali Mirza Ratan, Vice Presidents Alamgir Chowdhury Dulal, Shahidul Hasan Alam and General Secretary Akhteruzzaman Akhter.

Five of the accused were granted bail earlier. They are editor of the Danik Janakantha Atiqullah Khan Masud, editor of the Danik Sangram Abul Asad, editor of the Danik Dinkal Sanaullah Noori, editor of Chittagong-based Bangladesh News Agency Nizamuddin Ahmed and editor of the Danik Karotia Mozammel Huq Lahu.

Warrants were issued against publisher of the Danik Sangram SMH Humayun and publisher of the Danik Janata Abdus Sattar as they failed to appear before the court.

Arrest of N'ganj AL leaders demanded

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 28: Speakers at a rally here today demanded immediate arrest of Awami League leaders Nazma Rahman and Shamim Osmari for their alleged involvement in the recent killings of two AL activists.

The rally was organised at the DIT market square under the banner of the people of Narayanganj. The rally, addressed mostly by AL leaders, also gave a 15-day deadline for the police to arrest the Nazma-Shamim group. Otherwise, they warned, the administration would be held responsible for any consequences.

Chaired by AL leader Alam Chan Munshi, the rally was also addressed by Jahangir Alam, the just-expelled Juba League president of Narayanganj town. Selim Reza and Khwaja Rahmatullah of the AL-backed Chhatra League, Khwaja Ahsanullah of the Jatiya Party, Alhaj Shah Newaz of the Bangladesh Hosiery Association and Ali Asgar Badal, petitioner of the Sohel murder case.

The rally was followed by a procession that paraded the main thoroughfares.

Meanwhile, a pro-Nazma-Shamim group Chhatra League leader, Mobarak Hossain, issued a statement today saying that the August 23 extended meeting of the Chhatra League demanded withdrawal of 'false' cases against the local AL leaders.

Lankan govt to review past regime's deals

COLOMBO, Aug 28: Sri Lanka's new administration today announced it was seeking the revision of multi-million dollar contracts awarded to foreign firms by the last government, which has been accused of looting the treasury, reports AFP.

Information Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake said the government had already suspended deals worth nearly a billion dollars to assess the damage done to the economy, and warned that it may not be able to honour the contracts in full.

"Since we warned everybody that they should not rush into agreements with the former government, which was in a caretaker capacity just before the election, no one can say we did not tell them," Senanayake told AFP.

"We need time to examine the legal positions and seek a revision of the terms. We want to explain to our people what has happened. Because of the legal implications we may reluctantly pay only the minimum," he added.

Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga put off the signing of an agreement due on Monday with the French-led European Airbus industries, and sought more time to probe the 750-million dollar transaction, a spokesman for the Premier said.

Sri Lanka was to buy seven brand new Airbus aircraft, but later scaled down the order to five planes out of which two A-320 models have already been delivered. The remaining three A-340s were due to be delivered next month and in February.

EC plans model polls in Sylhet municipality

SYLHET, Aug 28: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mohammad Abdur Rauf today disclosed a plan to hold model election in Sylhet Municipality, reports UNB.

He was addressing a gathering of people's representatives, including union parishad chairmen and municipal chairmen and commissioners, here in the morning.

Justice Rauf said voters must be involved in the election process and management to ensure fair election. "Direct voter participation in election management is essential for exercising the voting rights without any hindrance."

He emphasised on identifying genuine voters and establishing permanent polling centres. For this, he said, the Election Commission has taken up programme to register every voter separately.



Princess Diana, in the midst of a fresh controversy whipped up by Britain's tabloid press regarding her friends and secret liaisons, turned up for a game of tennis at the Harbour Club in London's fashionable Chelsea area yesterday.

Daring dacoity at ex-CEC's house

Some dacoits entered the residence of a retired judge at Banani in the city and damped with ornaments and cash yesterday, reports UNB.

Police said some 9 to 10 dacoits equipped with revolver and daggers entered the residence of Justice ATM Masud at House No 3, Road NO 10/A, Bloc H, Banani at about noon and locked up the guards in a room at gunpoint.

They disconnected the two telephone lines and tied up Justice Masud, the former Chief Election Commissioner — his wife, son Maruf Sami and eight servants. They then damped with cash and ornaments worth about Tk 14.87 lakh, police said.

The guards said the dacoits, who were in their 30s and 40s, had told them they had come to consult Salma Masud Chowdhury, daughter of Justice Masud, who is a lawyer of the Supreme Court, about a case.

As soon as the guards opened the gate, the dacoits overpowered them at gunpoint.

Private sector urged to develop capital market

Prime Minister's Special Envoy M. Morshed Khan has called upon the private sector to come forward to utilise the present macro economic stability in the country and transform it into growth, reports UNB.

The private sector should play a vital role in the development of the capital market, he said commenting on a keynote paper, 'Capital Market to Industrialisation in Bangladesh', at a seminar in Dhaka yesterday.

Khan, speaking as the guest of honour, lauded the role of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in regulating, transforming and developing the nascent capital market in Bangladesh.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) organised the seminar on 'Private Sector Growth: Creating a Conducive Environment,' with the help of the ZDH, a German agency that provides technical assistance to the private sector in developing countries.

Three key-note papers were presented in two sessions yesterday. The concluding day of the two-day seminar inaugurated by Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman on Saturday.

Prof. Abu Ahmed presented the paper on the capital market while the other two papers — "Credit and Taxation" and "Human Resource, Infrastructure and Industrialisation" — were presented by Abdul Karim and Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley respectively.

Energy Secretary Muhammad Faizur Razaque was the other guest of honour at the seminar.

Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment M. M. Kamal Haque and Director General of the Bangladesh Management Development Centre (BMDC) Salina Khan chaired the two working sessions.

Another story of late-night nuisance calls

LONDON, Aug 28: A former friend of Princess Diana said he received late-night nuisance calls from an anonymous caller after his friendship with the estranged wife of Prince Charles cooled, reports Reuters.

The News of the World newspaper quoted James Hewitt as saying he had received 10 silent late-night calls in a short period a year ago after he and Diana, described as once close friends, drifted apart.

Hewitt, a former army major who earlier this year went public with the story of his friendship with Diana, told The News of the World: "The phone would ring, I'd pick it up and say 'hello, hello' but there was nothing at the other end."

"I thought it was a crank at first."

Diana has fiercely denied making nuisance phone calls to friend and art dealer Oliver Hoare, which a police inquiry is alleged to have traced back to her home and mobile telephone.

She said dark forces — widely taken to mean allies of her estranged husband Prince Charles — had framed her to make her seem mad.

Buckingham Palace said it had no comment to make on the reported remarks by Hewitt.

Police, who investigated the calls to Hoare after a complaint from his household, said they had not heard from Hewitt.

There was no indication in The News of the World story whether any attempt was made to trace the source of the calls to Hewitt.

The Midnight File

US seeks democratic reform in Cuba

WASHINGTON, Aug 28: The Clinton administration's policy coordinator on Cuba said today that the United States was seeking democratic reform in Cuba, not the overthrow of President Fidel Castro. "What we want the Cuban people to do is to determine their own future in a democratic way," Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff said on the NBC television programme "Meet the Press," reports Reuters.

King Hussein in Bonn

AMMAN, Aug 28: King Hussein of Jordan flew to Bonn today for a two-day official visit, to be followed by talks with President Francois Mitterrand in Paris, officials said here. The king would first discuss the Middle East peace process and bilateral ties with German leaders Monday, the officials said, reports AFP.

Rocket attack on Kabul residential area: 12 die

KABUL, Aug 28: Dozens of rockets slammed into residential sections of Kabul on Sunday, killing at least 12 civilians and wounding more than 50, hospitals said, reports AP.

All the victims were in the Khairkhana neighbourhood in northwest Kabul, where residents have congregated to avoid the front-line fighting along the southern and eastern edges of the city.

But Khairkhana remains well within rocket range of renegade Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his ally, warlord Rashid Dostum, whose men are entrenched on the city's outskirts.

The city's three main hospitals reported 12 dead and 52 wounded, but the actual casualty toll was almost certainly higher because many victims of the fighting are never able to make it to a hospital.

Forces loyal to the two opposition groups have been pounding the city with rockets almost daily since Jan. 1 in a bid to oust President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

The opposition forces haven't gained any ground, but they have flattened much of the capital. More than 2,000 people have been killed in the fighting, upwards of 20,000 have been injured and hundreds of thousands have fled their homes.

In another development, delegates from various groups began selecting leaders for a proposed grand assembly of elders, or *loya jirga*. The assembly will try to bring an end to the fighting and reach a consensus on a new leadership for the war-torn country.

Hilsa export

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sisting on reduction of price to Rs 35-45, breaching the contract.

The Ministry of Commerce, however, refused to issue No-Objection Certificate (NOC) to exporters willing to sell at reduced price. It also took a firm stand on the price, putting Rs 54 a kilo as the benchmark rate for any Hilsa export to India in the current season.

The impasse, however, broke as the Indian buyer agreed to honour the original contract following a series of discussions.

One of the six exporters told UNB on Saturday that he expects to resume shipment of Hilsa on Thursday through the Benapole border.

He expressed the hope that at least 500 tons of Hilsa would be exported to India by the end of September.

Meanwhile, Hilsa exporters have complained about harassment by Customs and BDR at the border on plea of inspection of the cargo delaying the consignments which are perishable. A truck load of Hilsa delayed on the border were rotten on July 27.

They also urged the authorities to check illegal trade of Hilsa through the river and land routes.

Two stabbed

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and stabbed indiscriminately.

Jahangir lay motionless in a pool of blood while Berek, bleeding profusely, kept screaming for help. The assailants fled the scene immediately, leaving behind a blood-stained knife.

Both victims were rushed to the DMCH where Jahangir was declared dead by the attending physicians. Berek was admitted and needed emergency surgery. His condition was stated to be critical.

Motijheel thana recovered the knife and are investigating into the crime.

No arrests had been made in connection with either incident till writing of this report late last night.

Meanwhile, the fish, fruit and vegetable exporters have condemned the killing of Jahangir Alam and demanded punishment of the culprits. As their mark of protest they will observe a strike today (Monday).

CHT truce

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Convenor of the Sub-Committee Rashed Khan Menon MP said the meeting was successful and held in cordial atmosphere, according to UNB.

"We have reached a delicate stage in the discussion" and gone a long way towards bringing peace in the area, he said.

Menon added: "The problem in Chittagong Hill Tracts will be solved politically." The two sides will meet again in November.

The five-point demand of the PCJSS discussed in the meeting includes one administrative unit for the entire region dissolving the three existing Local Government Councils at Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts, withdrawal of the post-1947 settlers and the Army from the hill tracts region, and constitutional guarantee for peace in the area.

BMA memo

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suspension orders against 12 doctors of the Tongi and Gazipur health complexes.

In the memorandum, the BMA leaders also demanded removal of the Health Secretary, whom it accused of obstructing the implementation of the doctor's demands.

Earlier on the day, the BMA organised a rally at the PG Hospital where central leaders spoke.

After the rally, the BMA members in a procession headed for the Prime Minister's office. However, they were stopped by the police near the Bangla Motor Crossing.

Seven of the BMA central leaders — Dr. M. A. Majed, Dr. Gazi Abdul Huq, Dr. Rafiq Chowdhury, Dr. Mushtaq Hossain, Dr. Shakawat Hossain, Dr. Ibrul Hasan Chowdhury and Dr. Amiruzzaman Khan were allowed to go to the PM's office and submit the memorandum.

IMF suggestion

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The approval was based on good track record of the country. The surveillance is likely to help the country secure confidence of the donors that it would pursue sound economic policies.

Projecting how the global economies performed last year, the IMF official said "The world environment improved significantly last year except Africa."

Total output increased by 2.3 per cent compared with a rise of 1.8 per cent in 1992, the annual report said, largely owing to significant growth in the developing countries.

The world growth rate was 3.3 per cent last year against 1.8 per cent in the year before. The developing countries achieved 6.1 per cent growth rate but the industrialised countries 1.2 per cent.

The world trade increased by 2.7 per cent with imports by developing countries going up by 8.7 per cent. Imports by industrialised countries, however, declined by 0.2 per cent.

With the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, we are optimistic about future world trade volume," the IMF official said.