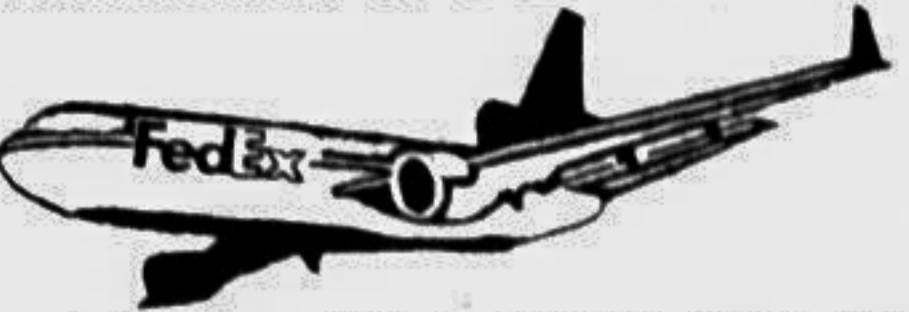


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The World on Time

## New species of crab found in St Martin's

By Shehab Ahmed



The newly found crab.

— Star photo

A new species of crab has been found by a Bangladeshi wild life biologist in St Martin's Island.

The huge red crab — Ozius Regulosus — was never identified in Bangladesh earlier, the wild life expert, Dr Mohammad Ali Reza Khan told The Daily Star.

Dr Khan came across the 110 mm crab nestled among the corals of the St Martin's in July 1994. But its identification was confirmed in May this year by Dr B F Chaffgar, a crab expert from Bombay, Michael Apel of Senkenberg Museum, Germany, Prof Qamar Banu and Nurul Huda of Chittagong University.

It joins about 50 species of crab found in the country. It may have already joined the lucrative crab and turtle export market of about Tk 100 crore.

But there has been no proper study on the crab population even though these constitute bulk of the export. There is no list of endangered species.

The crabs are also not being carefully trapped. They are caught indiscriminately threatening their stocks, eventually their export potentials, he said.

Dr Khan is now on a visit to Dhaka. A former teacher of

Dhaka University, he now works in Dubai as head of the Dubai Zoo.

"Unless we are careful now, the crabs may soon meet the fate of the frogs, whose legs became a prime export commodity in the late seventies and eighties," Dr Khan said.

Although in the late eighties a ban was imposed on the export of frog legs under pressure at home and abroad, the frogs have become a rare species in the wetlands.

The crab faces the similar fate. Shrimp farmers harvesting the coastal water shrimp fries also net the crabs regardless of their size. The big ones are kept and the smaller and immature ones are simply discarded, the expert said describing his experience from recent trips to the coastal areas.

The authorities should take care before it is too late. There should be detailed studies on the crab population and their culture that would help boost exports in an organised way."

There had been only two studies by the wild life biologists from Chittagong University. Some studies have also been done at Khulna University, he said.

## Aero Bengal to resume flights from today

By Staff Correspondent

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All flights will operate from domestic section of the Zia International Airport (ZIA).

The airline will also operate flights to Jessor and Cox's Bazar routes soon.

Air Commodore (retd) Molin Islam, a senior official of the airline, said all schedules have been approved by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

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