THE United Nations has declared 1998 as the International Year of the Ocean. In a previous article in The Daily Star (November 12). issues specific to oceanic pollution were discussed. This piece attempts to explore issues related to fisheries conservation including a look into the fisheries situation in Bangladesh. The Global Picture: Until fairly recently, very few people were concerned with the limits to marine resources. However, with the industrialisation of fisheries. there has been a tremendous rise in the world's total annual fish catch. In 1850, the total annual catch was only two million tons, whereas by the late 1960s, it reached 55 million tons. The trend in increased fish catch suddenly evened out in the early 1970s and remained at the same level through the decade. Nevertheless, with the upward growth of both human population and the number of fishing vessels and improvement of technology: the catch per unit of fishing efforts, and the catch per unit of

clined on a steady rate. According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN. "overfishing" has depleted, exploited or overexploited 70 per cent of the global fish stocks. The total catch declined in 13 out of 15 of the world's major fisheries regions. Although pollution and habitat destruction have significant impact in the growing crisis in the world fisheries, the principal problem lies in the increased capacity of the fishing

dollar invested in fisheries de-

industry. The worldwide fishing industry in terms of the number of people and the efficiency of their high-tech equipment, has simply grown too large for the regenerative

capacity of the oceans. The term "overfishing" has been described by the environmental group Greenpeace as "taking more fish from a stock than can be naturally replaced." In a recently released report, this group claims that in stark contrast to the trend in fisheries depletion, the world's industrial fishing fleet has increased 22 per cent since 1991. In addition to overfishing. other problems that lead to the depletion of living resources in our oceans include bycatch, habitat loss, industrial pollution and runoff from the land. The latter three problems were touched upon in the previous

The problem of bycatch (fish and wildlife caught unintentionally by nets, lines, hooks etc) also remains a major cause in fisheries depletion. Statistics show that on a global scale, fishermen discard 25 per cent of their catch each year because their fishing methods and fish-ing gear do not discriminate between commercially important fish and those without commercial value.

Role of Subsidies in the Global Fisheries Depletion: In a recently published article (June 3) in The Guardian, Norman Myers of Oxford University underscored the distorting effects of subsidies in the global fisheries crisis. His article reports that the global marine fisheries catch is annually worth more by Sarwat Chowdhury

It is interesting to note that Bangladesh is included in World Wildlife Fund's list of the top 20 fishing nations that account for about 80 per cent of the world's marine fish catch. India is the other South Asian country to make the list. Therefore, along with industrialised countries like the United States, the poor fishermen of Bangladesh share the responsibility to safeguard the fisheries environment and the future of global fisheries.

than \$ 100 billion at dockside. and it is sold for about \$80 bil-

The gap is made up with government subsidies. Such a practice foster over-exploitation of the depleted fish stocks, which is "followed by bankruptcy for fishing businesses and unemployment for tens of thousands of fishermen." While subsidies can offset deficiencies of the marketplace and support the disadvantaged sectors of the society, perverse subsidies can favor unsustainable development of the fisheries sector.

Global Fisheries Conservation Efforts: In the United States, governmental efforts to limit the types of nets used or the length of fishing seasons have had negligible success because of newer technologies that allow the harvesting of more fish in less time. Governmental regulators are increasingly realising that, access to fisheries need be limited and the fishermen should be provided with a vested interest

in conserving the fish stock. Various fisheries management methods include Individ ual Transferable Quotas or ITQs that allocate fixed quota shares to individual fisherman which allows them to catch a percentage of the total allowable catch

of a given fishery. Commercial fisheries in Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, and Australia have adopted the ITQ approach. However, there are some problems with this approach including intentional dumping of dead fishes which have lesser economic value (this practice is known as "highgrading"). ITQ approach also may cause dumping of caught fish when the quota has been already reached. Monitoring of the overall fishing practice remains very important for successful implementation of the

ITQ system.

Another example of fisheries management can be drawn from in Alanya, Turkey. This fishing village in Turkey came up with their own solution to conserve their fisheries resources. By drawing lots for fishing locations at the beginning of each season, and then rotating to a new position each day, the number of fishermen in each spot is controlled. If anyone crosses into another site or violates their agreed upon rules, the fishermen notice and report that immediately. No outside enforcer is required in the process (almost like the peer pressure effects of the Grameen Bank loan approach). Since every fishermen

has a vested interest in their "spot of the day", this automatically provides them with the incentive to monitor. Through this entire process, limited entry and effective enforcement remains local and low cost.

Wetlands and the Case of Bangladesh: Geographically most of Bangladesh lies in the Bengal basin. This vast lowland contains the largest delta in the world formed by the Brahmaputra and Ganges river system. It is thought that this lowland basin was once one of the largest wetlands in the world. However, during the past few thousand years, the vast wetlands have been converted into rice growing areas, with a few remaining wetland areas.

According to Peter Weber of the Washington D.C. based Worldwatch Institute, "the densely populated delta country of Bangladesh has impounded at least 30,000 square kilometers of wetland for agriculture; it is no coincidence that Bangladesh has the world's highest population density for a mainland country, as well as the largest area of impounded farmland." The main wetlands in Bangladesh are rivers and streams, shallow fresh water lakes, fish ponds, seasonally flooded cultivated plains, and marsh areas more commonly known as haors, baors, beels or

The wetlands in Bangladesh can be divided into two princi-

pal regions: the Ganges-Brahmaputra flood basin and the Haor basin of the north east region. The haor basin is a wetland eco-system of remarkable national and international significance with rare and vulnerable species of plants, ani-mals including endemic species and large number of migratory birds. Unfortunately, the gradual loss of many of the perennial water bodies have resulted in a severe loss of fresh water

fisheries and the associated loss of biodiversity. Hilsha, the King of Fish: The Hilsha fish constitutes about 30 per cent of the Bangladesh's total fish production. It is an important source of protein for Bangladeshis. It is also estimated that 40 per cent of the fishermen or 2 per cent of the total Bangladeshi population earn their livelihood from Hilsha fishery directly or indirectly. Three separate species of the Hilsha fish is found in the Bay of Bengal of which two are restricted to the marine environment. The third, Tenualosa ilisha is considered an anadromous (fish that travel upstream to spawn i.e. salmon) species. At the beginning of the monsoon, and consequent flooding of the rivers, the Hilsha resume its spawning migration upstream. Later, the newly hatched larvae and juveniles (locally known as Jatka) make their way downstream to the sea during a pe-

riod of several months feeding and growing on the way. Unfortunately, a large number of Jatka are caught during their grazing period by nets of small mesh size. Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute reports that, more than 3700 metric tons of Jatka are caught annually during their nursery season. Again, during the peak catch period, the shortage of sufficient storage and ice availability, and poor transport facilities result in the destruction of a huge amount of Hilsha fish

each year. A recent Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) funded research confirmed that the hilsha fishery in Bangladesh is a single genetic stock. Better management of this valuable resource is needed for the viability of the important food source. Steps should also be taken to ensure the survival of the Jatka, to improve their habitat, and to promote the ex-port of fish which cannot be locally consumed. Prompt distribution and sale mechanisms throughout the country can also prevent the wastage of the caught fish. Another prerequisite for the survival of our Hilsha fishery is ensuring of sufficient water discharge from the Ganges and Brahmaputra-Jamuna system. In addition to the indiscriminate exploitation of the Jatka, disruption of their migration routes, and increased fishing: low water discharge from the Ganges at Farakka barrage and associated heavy siltation is said to result in decline in riverine catch of the Hilsha fish. The total production of the Hilsha has remained more or less stable

during the past few years. But,

the bulk of the catch now come

from marine or estuarine areas.

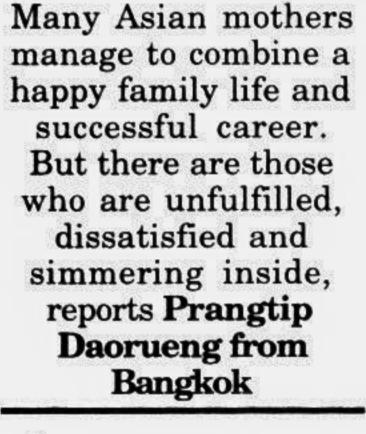
Concluding Thoughts: It is interesting to note that Bangladesh is included the World Wildlife Fund's list of the top 20 fishing nations that account for about 80 per cent of the world's marine fish catch. India is the other South Asian country to make the list. Therefore, along with industrialised countries like the United States, the poor fishermen of Bangladesh share the respon-sibility to safeguard the fisheries environment and the fu-

ture of global fisheries. A critical aspect of the fisheries depletion problem is the economic well-being of the fishermen themselves. A successful approach towards fisheries conservation needs to provide linkage between the economic health of the fishermen with the biological health of the fishery. Research efforts in various parts of the world have shown that, the fishermen have a greater knowledge of the local conditions, and have a stronger incentive to improve them. The fishermen and the fisheries lose out when decisions on management of fish-eries are made from outside.

Therefore, we should make concerted efforts to incorporate the fishing population in making decisions that affect their lives. Conservationists also advocate a switch from largescale intensive fishing efforts to smaller-scale community based fisheries. The role of the government cannot be marginalised in the process especially since fisheries are part of the public trust.

This piece is a follow-up to an earlier article published in the DS on November 12, 1998.

Simmering Inside



SIAN mothers are masters of multi-tasking. managing to look serene while performing their various roles as wife, mother, career professional and household manager-worker. But these women are sim-

mering within, says new research by an international advertising agency. It is not resentinent, though, that they are keeping bottled inside, says a research team of Ogilvy & Mather, which did the study.

Indeed, the team says in 'Simmering Within: Asian Mothers and Their Rising Expectations', Asian women go through each day with sadness and dissatisfaction, conscious that life could be better.

The research was conducted in the first quarter of this year as an attempt to understand Asian mothers as a marketing target group, but the study also contains useful insights into the thoughts and ambitions of women across the region.

It covers 198 focus groups, consisting mostly of mothers with dependent children, in 22 cities in mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand.

As a result of the research, Ogilvy & Mather has come up with what it thinks is Asian women's portrait of a happy mother: someone who is successful in her career, busy with other things aside from mothering chores and emotionally stretching her roles.

This "ideal mother" is also organised, in control and resourceful. And while she may have others to share her household burdens, she is not blamed as neglecting her motherly duties. She maintains a close relationship with her children while her devotion to others is appreciated.

According to the researchers, Asian mothers are all too willing to sacrifice their own identity in anticipation of rewards that come in the form of family togetherness, their children's academic and career successes and their husbands' achievements in work.

But not only do the women feel that they have little opportunity for their personal fulfillment, they also think their accomplishments and their contributions to family and society are unappreciated and not

acknowledged enough. One woman in the Indian capital of New Delhi is quoted as saying, "I don't want to be reborn as a man. I want to be re-

born as the husband of my hus-

The Ogilvy & Mather researchers say the women's situation and attitudes are reflections of the double standard widely practised in Asian soci-

"Across the region, Asian societies continue to favour men in many respects, from schooling to salaries to sexual misbehaviour," they noted. "Society expects women to be quiet and submissive (although less so in places like Hong Kong and the Philippines)."

'Mothers themselves know that to satisfy the demand of their roles, they must make numerous sacrifices." the researchers added.

Yet while the dictates of tradition make it easier for the women to accept their myriad of responsibilities without much complaint, this does not mean they do not have hidden desires and their own ambi-

At one point in the research, participants were shown pictures from which they were made to choose one that they thought communicated happiness. Majority picked images related to more freedom, space and independence, report the researchers.

For instance, Thai working mother Watcharee Muthasathearn is kept busy cooking, dressing up and feeding her children and sending them to school during the morning, before she rushes off to her nineto-five job at a bank.

After work, the 38-year-old has to go to the market, cook dinner and wash the dishes During weekends, there is laundry to do for her husband and children, more cooking and dishwashing, as well as the obligatory visits to relatives.

"I love my two kids more than anything else," said Watcharee. "But sometimes I just wish I (could go) somewhere, leaving everything behind and be only with myself."

One Japanese mother told the researchers: "I want the courage to be able to say I want something for myself."

Even mothers in the Philippines — who the researchers note as having a very positive view of themselves, their opportunities and their situation at home — convey similar frustrations and fears as the women in the other Asian countries.

Still, there are signs that some changes are taking place. While most Asian mothers are unwilling to sacrifice family togetherness in exchange for independence, the researchers

AST Asia's financial crisis

has set back the region's

march towards economic

prosperity and stability,

unravelling the "economic

miracle" that has made it the

fastest growing region in the

Now, it is threatening to re-

Carol Bellamy, executive di-

verse widespread gains in child

health, education and other ba-

rector of the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF) says

nomic turmoil are "potentially

devastating" especially for

Speaking at a UNICEF min-

isterial consultation here. Bel-

lamy lamented how financial

markets have gained a priority

in "rescue" funding, at a time

when 1.3 billion people - half

of them children - still live in

"denied access to even the most

basic health and education ser-

vices, to adequate food and nu-

trition, to safe water and sani-

global financial markets are at

stake, tens of billions of dollars

are readily found to bail them

out. But when it comes to the

"When the interests of the

Bellamy said most were

absolute poverty.

children.

tation.'

the consequences of the eco-

sic services, say authorities.

say a greater sense of self-esteem can already be found among the most "elite" group: the professional working women.

This group of women, they say, believes they can survive alone if they have to, in contrast to the traditional attitude that men are supposed to be the breadwinners in the family.

One Bangkok working mother told the researchers that she never thought of "leaning" on her husband for financial support. She said: "I must be able to make a living for my-

relatively modest amounts of

money for basic services in

countries where the need is

greatest..... the world's re-

sponse is far from adequate."

consultation in Bangkok is the

fourth aimed at measuring

progress in East Asia and Pa-

cific in the goals for children

adopted at the 1990 World

ers set down commitments to

achieving goals in the areas of

health, nutrition, education,

able gains, the economic crisis

has awakened a sense urgency

and fear as countries, such as

Indonesia and Thailand, expe-

rienced major economic con-

Gains in child mortality.

immunisation, reduced malnu-

trition, maternal mortality,

even sanitation and basic edu-

cation are threatened by budget

cuts and growing unemploy-

is also emerging as a major

threat to the gains made against

child mortality, especially in

Indonesia." said a UN report

"The current economic crisis

But after posting consider-

and child protection by 2000.

Eight years ago world lead-

Summit for Children.

tractions.

ment.

The UNICEF ministerial

IPS/APB Feature

Children are Innocent Victims of Economic Crisis

Ron Corben writes from Bangkok

"When the interests of the global financial markets are at stake, tens of billions of dollars are readily found to

bail them out. But when it comes to the relatively modest amounts of money for basic services in countries where

said.

the need is greatest...... the world's response is far from adequate,"

Millions Will Flock to See Midnight at Midday

The country of Cornwall in southwestern England is already preparing for next August when it becomes the best spot in Britain to view a total solar eclipse. Gemini News Service reports on what's expected to be a huge invasion of visitors Colin Gardiner writes from Cornwall, Britain

T precisely 11.11 am on 11 August 1999, Cornwall ▲— the southwestern peninsula of England will be plunged into darkness.

The country will host the first total eclipse in Britain since 1927, with the next forecasted for 2090. And that means the greatest invasion of a swathe from Land's End to Falmouth Bay, where the eclipse will be clearest and longest, that Cornwall has ever

The eclipse comes at a time of year when the country is already besieged by holiday-makers. At least half a million more, from scientists and environmentalists to the eccentric and curious who do not want to miss the last great event of the 20th century, are expected to descend on the narrow strip of land that once had its own Celtic rulers

And that could all add up to chaos as the aura of midnight at midday conjures a fever of expectation. Already space in hotels and farmhouses is booked out and at sea a flotilla of yachts and cruise ships is likely to create the greatest armada since the D-Day landings of World War Two.

The eclipse represents an ac-

presented at the conference.

As health budgets are cut.

Malnutrition in the region.

present high immunisation

levels are expected to decline, it

where some 33 million children

'suffer from severe to moderate"

levels of hunger, will remain

even if there were rising in-

comes, the assessment report

quate amounts of nutritious

food is still a major cause of

malnutrition in Indonesia and

the Democratic People's Repub-

Maternal mortality rates

(MRR), which are already high,

are also expected to deteriorate.

"Approximately 40,000 women

still die each year in the East

Asia and Pacific region of

causes related to pregnancy and

sador, Anand Panyarachun

agreed the outlook had turned

bleak. "Day by day the situation

seems to deteriorate in many

countries, with more mass lay-

offs announced and ever grim-

mer projections for the years

even more families and chil-

dren in trouble, and more and

"There are more poor than

Thailand's UNICEF Ambas-

lic of Korea," it added.

child birth."

ahead," he said.

"But a lack of access to ade-

robatic situation for many hotels already filled to capacity with regular visitors while receiving an enormous number of requests from prospective watchers. The country hopes to cope by establishing a massive number of camp sites and extra bed and breakfast facilities for miles around.

When doomsday comes to Cornwall — some predicting the end of the world, others desiring to dance naked among the country's famous standing stones - everyone will be rooted to the spot as the eclipse blocks out the sun. In the two minutes and six seconds that it is at its zenith, the birds and the flow-

ers will decide the day is over. "It goes absolutely black at this time. Then the birds start preparing to go to sleep and the flowers begin to close," says Cornwall's former deputy tourist officer Roy Standing. "This is particularly fascinating for those interested in environmental issues, and studies have been made on August 11 each year to give a comparison.

When the epic day of the eclipse comes not even a blade of grass will move without authority. While emergency services will be operating, the authorities will be guarding

more people who need help but

cannot find it." he said at the

situation, "it is only through

investment in people, starting

with children, that we can en-

quate investment in the devel-

opment of human resources in

order to redeem the "economic

cue packages should not be used

to assist only the immaculately

tailored, Mercedes driving fi-

nanciers who are in need of a

bailout, but rather the barefoot

farmers who travel by water

buffalo and the women and

children of the rice paddies," he

the economic distress gripping

many countries has caused so-

cial and political repercus-

sions, in some cases made

worse by natural disasters,

adding that "the economic out-

"The consequences, espe-cially for children, are poten-

is at best uncertain"

tially devastating."

look for the more distant future

Bellamy, meanwhile, said

"In addition, economic res-

He said this required ade-

sure our future," Ananda said.

But whatever the economic

conference.

miracle.

1999: Darkness at noon Last visible eclipse: 1927 Next visible eclipse: 2090 Falmouth, at Britain's sothwest tip, is eclipse perfectly placed for viewing the eclipse

against an exodus that could turn Cornwall's winding lanes into one massive traffic jam. Nobody in, nobody out, except under the most controlled conditions, is likely to be the byword in Operation Eclipse.

For two years now working parties have been meeting - police, fire brigade, ambulance, highway authorities and rescue services, which are normally used to explosions, shipwrecks and disasters.

In Mexico seven years ago all traffic was stopped for some four hours either side of the eclipse. The Cornish authorities are talking more about four days to travel down and four days to travel back, encouraging visitors to come early, stay long and leave late.

Almost certainly Cornwall will declare a public holiday for the occasion. But then it is one of the most attractive counties in England for tourism and there will follow a week of rejoicing in the fishing villages and towns with events galore a celebration of the millennium that Cornwall will claim a little

bit early. Cornwall's great vision is to put itself more on the map internationally, and introduce its quaint history and coastline beauty to thousands who have never been there. Surrounding the eclipse will be vast programme of events from choir festivals to rock concerts and

While the towns and villages of Cornwall and the southern part of Devon, centred on Plymouth, claim the eclipse for Britain, it shares the darkened sun with several other countries. Starting in Nova Scotia, Canada, the spectacle travels of after its Cornish landfall to France, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Romania and then north of Istanbul to Mosul in Iraq.

Karachi in Pakistan and the

air displays

Bay of Bengal. The band covered by the eclipse — 80 km wide in Cornwall — reduces to 20 km by the time it reaches India. The eclipse's European path

will mean fewer travellers to Cornwall from there, but it will still draw the British like bees to the honeypot. In 1927, when one occurred in the north of England, it lasted just 25 seconds, but more trains were chartered to the event than ever before — or since.

Cornwall has already held talks with the six mother states in the European Union directly affected. The object is to create awareness of the phenomenon and particularly to educate children right across Europe. encouraging them to take an active interest in science. Schools and universities will be heavily involved.

The eclipse affords and scene that could not be more dramatic if there were an alien invasion. Everyone will be looking skywards. Such is the intensity of the eclipse that no sunglesses, binoculars, telescopes or viewfinders will be allowed and certainly not the naked eye — at the risk of one's retina being fried. Instead, special glasses with aluminised mylar filters

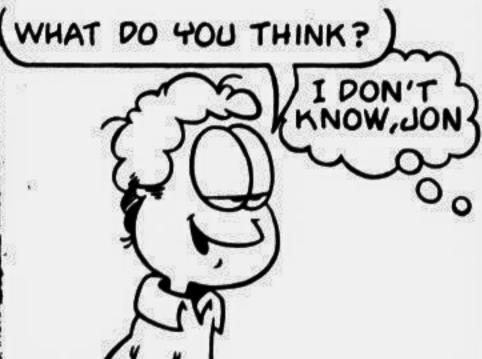
can be obtained. The wonderful clarity of the Cornish air, which comes from weather patterns in the Bay of Biscay, may have helped establish schools of painting which have thrived in Cornwall. But while this means enhanced viewing of the eclipse, it also increases the dangers of watching it, unless it becomes

cloudy. And after it's all over, Cornwall will not see another eclipse for 360 years.

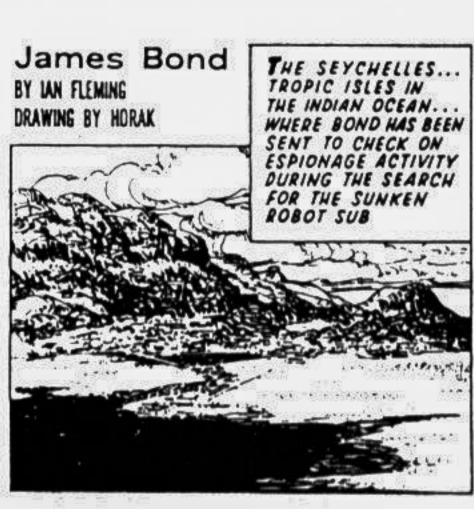
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