

EVICION DRIVE AGAINST ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS OF KHAS LAND

Frozen food exporters see a ray of hope

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Frozen food exporters urge the caretaker government (CG) for allocating khas land in coastal areas to the shrimp cultivators as per 1993 decision of the government to help flourish the sector.

A decision taken by the Ministry of Fisheries in 1993 to allocate 100 acres of khas land to each shrimp farm was incorporated into the export policy at an inter-ministerial meeting on March 21 in 1997, sources said.

Accordingly, the ministry of land made a directive for allocating 40 shrimp entrepreneurs 100 acres of land each from some 13,000 acres of shrimp cultivable land that are now occupied by a section of people illegally at the coastal areas of Noakhali, sources added.

The shrimp cultivators started pursuing for the khas land earmarked for them when the joint forces recovered some 10,000

acres of such land from the occupants at coastal areas of Noakhali and Sonadia at the offshore island of Moresh Khali in Cox's Bazar.

Allocation of the khas land to the genuine cultivators and frozen food exporters will help the country earn an additional revenue of Tk 2000 crore and Tk 100 crore as the lease money a year, sources said.

Bangladesh earned foreign revenue of Tk 3200 crore exporting 38,000 metric tons of shrimp last fiscal year.

But the shrimp farmers are yet to get the land, said the sources at Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association (BFFEA), blaming negligence of the district administration for it.

Noakhali district administration could not recover the khas land from the occupants who filed writ petition claiming the land as landless people, having blessing of local lawmakers, said the sources.

BFFEA President Maqsoodur Rahman welcomed the ongoing eviction drive and called for disbursement of the land among the shrimp cultivators.

Meanwhile, BFFEA leaders had already held a meeting with Agriculture and Fisheries Adviser Dr Chowdhury Sajjadul Karim and decided to meet Land Adviser Barrister Mainul Husein next month, he said.

"Allocation of these land to the genuine cultivators and exporters would help establish a model project to fetch a minimum local and foreign investment of Tk 3,000 crore for development of infrastructure and modern methods of shrimp cultivation," Maqsoodur said on Monday.

"Many foreign investors have already expressed interest in making investment in such a shrimp farming project here," he said.

He said there are some one lakh acres of khas land suitable

for shrimp cultivation in the coastal areas. But no land was given to any real shrimp cultivator in the last two decades, BFFEA president said.

Some 5000 acres of land were allocated to the poor people at Rampura under Chakaria in Cox's Bazar in the late eighties, he said.

But the allottees had neither fund nor any experience for shrimp cultivation to fulfill the purpose of allocation, he added.

He said the shrimp cultivators need only some 4000 acres of land where they can raise a farming project and increase the production by four times through modern method of cultivation.

At present shrimp is being cultivated on some 1.70 lakh hectares of land in the coastal areas to produce 250kg in each hectare when production can be raised to 1000kg in each hectare through setting up a modern project, he said.



Tobacco has almost replaced paddy from a vast area of Chakaria, Lama and Alikadam in Cox's Bazar as the farmers, allured reportedly by different tobacco companies, are now more interested in tobacco cultivation for better profit.

Dirty clothes aggravate suffering of CMCH patients

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Used and dirty clothes have been stockpiled at the CMCH stores for the last several weeks due to damage in laundry equipment, aggravating sufferings of the patients.

The laundry plant at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) has remained closed for several weeks as its machines are out of order.

Around 5,000 pieces of dirty clothes of different wards, which are stockpiled in the hospital storeroom, are not being washed due to technical disorder.

CMCH authorities said they now manually wash only 20 percent of the dirty garments like bed sheet, pillow cover and other clothes daily with the help of Ferrous Traders under a contract.

Prof Quamar Banu, a teacher of Zoology Department of Chittagong University and a member of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA), said hazardous bacteria can be formed in the stockpiled clothes that might cause serious health hazards to the people working in the adjoining rooms.

Prof Anwar Hossain, chairman of Microbiology Department of Chittagong Medical College (CMC), however, said there is nothing to be worried if the dirty clothes are not used again.

The laundry plant, set up in 1970, has not procured any new machine or equipment or replaced the older ones, sources said.

Major equipment, including two washing machines, two drier-cum-iron and a water soaker (rinsing machine) are out of order for long.

A washing machine was damaged on the first week of last month and the second one on January 17 while the big drier-cum-iron became dysfunctional on January 29.

Earlier the only water soaker (rinsing machine) was damaged on December 15 last year.

Usually around 1200 dirty clothes like bed sheet, pillow cover, curtain, gown, towel and



Dirty clothes, including bed sheet, blanket and other garments, lie in heaps beside the damaged washing machine in the CMCH store.

blanket supplied from the 34 wards of the hospital, are washed at the laundry everyday.

The hospital authorities have a contract with the firm, Ferrous Traders, to wash specially the garments, clothes and other items used in the operation theatre.

The firm is able to wash manually some 100 garments, clothes and other items like OT Gown, Mop (blood sucker), eye-musk, OT bed sheet, double sheet, OT towel, hand towel, bath towel and others used in the OT everyday.

CMCH authorities sent a letter to the Chief Technical Manager of National Electro Medical Equipment Workshop (NEMEWS), a centre for repairing and maintenance of the equipment in government hospitals, in Dhaka on January 10 after the first washing machine was damaged.

A team from the centre led by Sub-Assistant Engineer Md Habib visited the hospital last month to look into the matter.

Linen Keeper Giasuddin

Chowdhury said he sent another letter on February 17 to the NEMEWS without any response yet.

Patients at different wards are now suffering for want of clean clothes.

A nurse in the medicine ward (No-16) said they got back only 20 pieces of dirty clothes out of 60 pieces of dirty clothes that were supplied on Sunday to the laundry.

Nurses and ward boys in other medicine wards also came up with the same allegations.

The situation is worst in general surgery wards, Orthopaedic Surgery, Neuro Surgery and four Gynaecology wards as the clothes become dirty quickly in these wards.

Prity, a nurse at surgery ward, said they are now trying to keep the clothes clean as much as possible and use a bed sheet for several days.

Besides, nurses and ward boys at other wards request the patients to manage bed covers on their own, sources said.

Afroze Akhter, a staff nurse of the Post Natal Ward, said they have recruited two sweepers to wash dirty clothes in the ward last week.

The authorities to cope with the situation, are now trying to wash the dirty clothes supplied from these wards and the operation theatre on priority basis with the help of the contracting firm.

But some eight people of the firm are able to wash only 300 to 400 pieces of clothes manually daily, including equipment of OT.

Instrument Caretaker (ICT) Md Maniruzzaman said he sent another letter to the NEMEWS on Sunday to solve the problem.

Senior Store Officer Dr Debashish Datta on Monday said two repairers, including a NEMEWS engineer, were supposed to repair at least one washing machine and a drier on the day.

NEMEWS will float tender to start the repair work next month, sources said.

the week that was

Pitha festival held

A 'Basanta Mela and Pitha Festival' was celebrated in the port city aiming to acquaint the new generation with the traditional foods, mainly the pitha, cake.

Lions Clubs International District-315-B4, Bangladesh organised the event on the Lions Foundation premises in the port city on Friday.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life joined the programme. Basanta Mela was held in the morning while the pitha festival at noon and folk song in the afternoon.

The traditional pithas displayed by the members of the club included Pantao, Daler Pitha, Deempuri, Puli Pitha, Sheuli

Pitha, Narikel Pitha, Banpitha, Patapuli Pitha, Golap Pitha, Duh Pitha, Raschitoi, Goijia, Vapa Pitha, Chhainna, Mantasa and Khejur Puli.

Lions Clubs Governor Dr Sri Prakash Biswas was the chief guest at the festival with Zafar Ullah in the chair.

Lions District Vice-Governor Kabir Uddin Bhuiyan, former district Governor Ikram Hossain, Rafiq Ahmed, PR Sinha, Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, Cabinet Secretary Mohammed Mahabubul Haq Khan, Cabinet Treasurer AHM Kafil Uddin, Governor Adviser Dr Abdullah Al Harun and Region Chairperson Mian Iftekhar Anwar also attended the festival.

Bird fair ends

Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor

(VC) Prof M Badiul Alam emphasised the need for protecting the species of birds to keep balance in biodiversity.

He was addressing as chief guest the closing ceremony of Pakhi Mela, bird fair, -2007 and prize giving ceremony on CU campus.

Zoology Department organised the fair on Nipaban Shishu Bidyalaya premises on Friday.

Terming birds as an important element of ecosystem Prof Badiul said, "Birds are being destroyed from our environment in an alarming rate day by day and this is the high time to take initiative to protect them".

Chief Coordinator of the programme Prof Badrul Amin Bhuiyan and Bangladesh Birds Club President Inam-Al Haq were present on the occasion.

The daylong programme included bird-related quiz, speech and open painting competition for the children.

Later, the chief guest handed over prizes among the winners of the competitions.

Earlier, Biological Science Faculty Dean Prof Mohammed Anisul Islam inaugurated the programme in the morning.

Ballantyne Ice cream launched

Worldwide famous Australian Ballantyne Ice cream brand was formally launched at MFC (multinational food company) Golparah Outlet in the port city on Tuesday.

Bangladesh Australia Trade Commission Country Manager Minhaz A Chowdhury was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony while MFC Chairman AHM Shohab, Managing Director Sharful Haq, Director MAQ Zilani, Mohammed Ilias, Businessmen Ashfaq Ahmed and Habibur Rahman spoke at the ceremony.

Minhaz in his speech said the newly introduced brand will help develop the quality of the local products.

"Milky Australian products are popular across the globe and the ice cream is made for all age's people," Minhaz said.

Later, the guests distributed prizes among the winners of the painting and quiz competitions held on the occasion of Amar Ekushey.

Scout Camp-2007 concludes

The three-day 6th Inter-School and College Scout, Guide, Rover and Ranger Camp 2007 concluded here on Sunday.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) organised the camp at Outer Stadium for the students of CCC-run schools and colleges.

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated the camp hoisting the national flag.

CCC Chief Executive Officer Mostafa Kamal Uddin and Education Standing Committee Chairman Ward Commissioner Saleh Ahmad

Chowdhury were present.

Mohiuddin recalled the contribution of scouts, guides, rovers and rangers during the natural disasters in the country.

He urged the participants to be honest and patriotic to materialise the dream of building a developed Bangladesh.

Teachers of the participating schools and colleges, ward commissioners and CCC officials were present in the inaugural ceremony.

Around 800 students took part in 50 groups in the camp.

Shyamsundar-Shefali Smriti Padak contest

The Shyamsundar-Shefali Ghosh Smriti Sangskritik Padak competition concluded here on Friday.

Abasar Sangskritik Goshthi, a cultural organisation in the port city, organised the event at Chittagong Municipality Model High School.

More than 800 singers participated in 16 events, including regional songs (Chittagong dialect) in four groups Ka, Kha, Ga and Gha.

Chittagong Academy Director General Principal Anwar Alam inaugurated the competition with the Competition Convener Aujit Kumar Ich in the chair.

The organisation President Sanjit Banik, Prof Rita Dutta, Dipak Barua, journalist Obaidul Haq and Mohammed

Jahangir Mia attended the function.

Seminar on corporate world held

A daylong seminar on "Corporate World" was held on Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) Chittagong

campus on Tuesday.

IUB Business Students' Society (BSS) organised the seminar.

BSS Executive Director Tahlil Azim presided over the seminar while British American Tobacco Senior Executive Akhter Uddin Mahmud moderated it.

A total of 55 students of Business and Communication Schools took part in the seminar.

Mahmud discussed on different

aspects of the corporate world and emphasised the need for customer relation, organisation behaviour and leadership in the working life of the students.

BSS organises workshops, seminars and different competitions for its members and general students every year.



Chittagong University Fine Arts Department teachers Prof Abul Mansur, Prof Mansur UI Karim and Zahid Ali Jubaraj are seen going round the paintings of the landscape of Saint Martin island at an exhibition at Shilpakala Academy on Saturday.