

## Most fishermen denied govt help during fishing ban period

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government programmes to assist the seasonally unemployed fishermen are yet to cover most of them while the help provided in cash and kind is too scanty to meet the requirement, a survey report revealed yesterday.

The survey conducted on 450 families in three upazilas of Chandpur district by Actionaid also revealed that a large number of fishermen are still using the 'current' net to catch fish as they do not get the opportunity of alternative work or any financial help that was supposed to be provided by the government.

The study was presented at a discussion titled 'Preservation of fish and the dialogue of the fishermen' that was jointly organised by Channel i, the Saptahik 2000 and Actionaid at the seminar room of Local Government Engineering Department at Agargaon in the capital.

As the government has imposed a ban on catching all kinds of fish in March and April and Jatka (young hilsha) from November to May, the fishermen become unemployed for a certain period of time when they badly need an alternative income source.

"During the last three months I received only Tk 200 and 10 kg of

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Prayer Timing		
May 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

## TIB INVESTIGATION ON CTG PORT

# Bribery goes on secretly despite vigilance

UNB, Ctg

Although underhand dealings at Chittagong seaport seem to have ceased in the changed scenario, bribery still continues stealthily despite strict monitoring under the current anti-graft drive, says a private probe report.

According to a latest investigation by the Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB), in the first few months of 2007, about Tk 300 crore has been transacted in bribe while this amount was Tk 943.48 crore in 2006.

TIB yesterday released its findings at a roundtable in the conference room of Chittagong Chamber.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt General (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, who was present at the function, urged the government to go for tough action against the corrupt practices and irregularities.

TIB Trustee Board Treasurer M Hafiz Uddinn Khan presided over the discussion.

"Bribing is not taking place openly, but it is very much taking place in secret through the agents

of the corrupt officials... Even in many cases, the rate of bribe has increased. Both the importers and exporters are forced to bribe the port officials," the TIB investigation report revealed.

The TIB investigation was released at a time when some of the port-users are claiming that the performance of the port has improved in the recent days due to some measures taken by the caretaker government.

At the same time, there is a report that some international

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PHOTO: STAR

Civil society members and health sector experts at a roundtable on "Rethinking Health Care Services in Bangladesh" held at The Daily Star office in Dhaka yesterday.

## S Asian FMs reach consensus on launching Saarc dev fund

### Says finance adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday said the Saarc finance ministers have reached a consensus on forming a Saarc development fund.

He said the agreement was reached informally at a meeting of the Saarc finance ministers in Kyoto, Japan, on the sidelines of the 40th annual meeting of Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Board of Governors on May 5-7.

The adviser was talking to the reporters at Zia International Airport on his return from the ADB annual meeting that approved a \$40 million regional cooperation fund for regional development.

On the sidelines of the ADB meeting, the finance adviser had meetings with Asian leaders and heads of regional and international organisations. He also had meetings with his Japanese counterpart and the governor of Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

## Fresh case filed against Hannan for harassing fishermen

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A case under Speedy Trial Tribunal Act was filed Friday night against BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia's adviser Brig Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah, his son Shah Rezaul Hannan and eight others with Kapasia Police Station for harassing, torturing and filing false cases.

The other accused are Azharul

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# Health services dipped for lack of proper policy

## The Daily Star, NSU, Health 21 roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of proper policy and monitoring and non-implementation of existing regulations have led to severe deterioration in the country's health services, medical experts and civil society members said at a roundtable yesterday.

As a result, patients have lost confidence in healthcare facilities and most of them go abroad for treatment, causing huge economic loss to the country, they said, suggesting bringing major reforms in the sector in order to stop malpractice and commercialisation of health services.

The Daily Star, Public Health Department of North South University (NSU) and Health 21, a platform of medical professionals and civil society members, jointly organised the roundtable styled "Rethinking healthcare services in Bangladesh" at The Daily Star office.

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# 5 GIs killed, 3 others go missing in Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

Five US-led soldiers were killed yesterday and three reported missing after an attack south of Baghdad, the US military said, amid reports that the three troops had been captured.

"This morning at 4:44 am in Iraq, a coalition force team of eight

soldiers -- seven Americans and an Iraqi army interpreter -- were attacked 20 km west of Mahmudiyah," said spokesman Major General William Caldwell.

"As a result of this attack, five soldiers were killed in action and three are currently missing," he said, without clarifying whether

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## 8 held for visa, passport forgery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration police yesterday arrested eight people from the city's Fakirapul area on charges of passport and visa forgery and sending people abroad illegally.

The drive was conducted on information from a fortune seeker detained on Thursday night on his way to Saudi Arabia using fake passport.

Additional Superintendent of Police AKM Ehsanullah led the drive and arrested the eight.