

Dearth makes fish dearer

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Fish prices went up further in the city markets due to drastic fall in supply in the last few days.

No fish is available, except for cultured Pangash and catfish, below Tk 120 a kilogram now.

Fish markets at Palassy, Jigatola, New Market, Hatir Pool and Karwan Bazar looked dull yesterday compared to other days of the week.

Retailers were demanding Tk 200 for a kilogram of prawn and Tk 700 for lobsters. Bele was selling at Tk 200-250 while Tular Dandi (a sea variety) at Tk 120, Poa at Tk 140, Topsey Tk 170 and Telapia Tk 120-130.

Supply of local sweet water fishes was very poor. Ruhi below 1 kg size was selling at Tk 130-140 and above 1 kg between Tk 160 and Tk 220. Big Ayeer and Pangash were selling between Tk 300 and Tk 350 while Pabda at Tk 300.

Locally cultured Koi was selling at Tk 180-200 for 20 pieces while African catfish and cultivated Pangash both at Tk 70-80 a kg.

Hilsa, however was available at almost all the markets. Prices



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eased a little with a one-kg fish selling between Tk 300 and Tk 350.

Deshi (local variety) catfishes were almost absent and were selling at very high price. At Karwan Bazar, a fish seller demanded Tk 500 for 20 small pieces of 'Shing'. The price of Magur was almost similar to Shing.

Supply of sea fish also marked

a drastic fall pushing up the prices further.

Fish sellers at most kitchen markets attributed the situation to the 'sudden' fall in supply at Champatali at Swarighat, city's biggest fish wholesale market in the old part of the capital.

Wholesellers at Swarighat said they used to receive 120-150 big baskets of fishes a day from

across the country. But supply has fallen by around 25-30 percent in the last few days, they said.

Similar situation was observed yesterday at Kaptan Bazar, Jatrabari and the wholesale and retail markets at Karwan Bazar.

A leader of Kaptan Bazar fish sellers association and wholesaler feared further fall in supply in the coming weeks.

"The fallout of flood has just started," he said, "fishes will be dearer due to dearth of supply."

The month of Ramadan will add to the situation, he said.

According to sources in the fisheries department, fish farms over more than 90 thousand acres in 258 upazilas of 45 districts incurred huge loss due to heavy rain and flood.

Fishes and fries worth Tk 150 crore washed away from their flood-hit ponds and water bodies.

Dhaka Division bore the brunt as all the fish farms in 17 districts were badly hit by the recent flood, they said.

The officials however hoped that the quantity of fish will improve this winter after the 'prolonged' flood is over.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

TALE OF A PLAYGROUND: Players and residents of Indira Road and Manipuri Para are now confused whether the T&T ground is designated for them or for the Bangladesh Handloom Board. The last fair organised by the Board on this ground ended on May 30. It took the next two months to remove the stall construction materials from the site. Just when the residents were hoping to get back their playground last week another one-month fair has been scheduled from the first day of Ramadan.

Look-alikes of cellphone brands flood malls

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

City markets have been flooded with counterfeit cellular phones that are basically imitation of popular name brands including Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Samsung, etc..

These fake phones can be easily found at most cellphone shops -- even with street vendors all over the capital.

Although loaded with all the advanced features anyone can ever dream of, most of these cheap mobile phones are in fact substandard and flimsy. Lured by their attractive features along with the low prices, people are easily drawn into buying these cheap counterfeit mobile sets.

During a visit in a cellphone market, it was found that hundreds of substandard fake cellular phones were being sold openly.

When this correspondent asked Mahfuz, a cellphone retailer at Eastern Plaza, about the reason his store carries low-grade cellphones, he said, "We keep both superior and inferior quality mobile sets to serve the needs of different buyers."

"We do warn the customers about the possible drawbacks of low-grade products, but most of them tend to prefer the cheap ones -- the substandard ones," added Mahfuz.

With the invasion of Chinese-made look-alikes of popular brands, there is a surge of poor quality mobile sets in the market and the users become the worst

victims as they fall for the brand name at a cheap price.

Adnan Habib, a student of Dhaka City College, purchased a feature-rich cellular phone at a price of Tk 6 thousand from Motalib Plaza. Habib was thrilled to own a cellular phone featuring a camera, video playback, BlueTooth along with mp3 and mp4 function at such a low price.

Within a month of the purchase, however, the display of his cell phone stopped functioning.

"After the display went out just like that, I went to a dozen places trying to find a replacement [display] and I found none. The set has become quite useless," said a dismayed Habib.

A number of shopping centres in the city, especially Bangabandhu National Stadium Market, Motalib Plaza, Bashundhara City shopping complex, Rajlaksmy Complex, are swarming with substandard and counterfeit mobile sets.

While some of these 'look-alike' phones are being sold without any logo or brand affixed on them, most others are sold by using names and logos that spell or look similar to those of the major brand names.

Despite minor differences, the model numbers and the names or the logos affixed on the fake phones are readily indistinguishable from the original brand.

"Counterfeits of popular brands such as Nokia or Sony Ericsson can be easily found in the markets under the names



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Nokia or Sony Emerson," said Sikiandar Ali, a retailer at Eastern Plaza shopping complex.

During visits in city markets, numerous imitations of Nokia cellphones were found to be selling under many different names such as Nckia, Ndkia, Nokai, Inokia, Noka and Nokta.

Similarly, fake Sony Eriksson phones were selling under names like Sony Erison or Song Ericson.

In a cellphone store at the Motalib Plaza, a Nokia 6300 mobile set was available at a price of Tk 16,000 while the

counterfeit, with identical looks and features, was for sale at a price of only Tk 5,000.

When an original Sony Ericsson Cybershot phone comes at a price of Tk 18,000, the Chinese look-alikes are available for only Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000.

Most salesmen refuse to refer to these mobile phones as counterfeits. "These are Chinese brand products, not counterfeits," said Nurul Huque, a mobile phone retailer at Motalib Plaza. "You can purchase them

if you like. If you consider these fakes, than just don't buy them," he advised.

Asked why the prices of the Chinese phones are so low, Huque said Chinese products sell at lower prices everywhere.

However, a number of salesmen admitted that most of these sets are substandard imitation of the major name brands.

"The Chinese made mobile phones have very low durability. You may not be able to recharge their batteries after a month or two," said Rafique Hossain, a

retailer from Basundhara City Complex.

To makes matters worse, these cheap mobile phones do not come with any warranty or after sales service.

City dwellers alleged that a number of sellers, although promising to provide service warranties during purchase, refuse to take any responsibility of a malfunctioning product later on.

According to mobile phone businessmen, around 70 percent mobile phones available in the markets are counterfeits and are substandard.

"About 70 percent, if not more, of mobile phone sets available in the market are imitations of popular brands. These substandard products are taking over the market due to unabated smuggling," said Nizam Uddin, president of Bangladesh Mobile Phone Businessmen's Association.

"The widespread availability of counterfeit mobile phones through massive smuggling and customs corruption are actually depriving the government of a huge revenue," he added.

According to Russel Mahmud, Manager of Mobile Zone, distributor of Sony Ericsson mobile sets, to be able to distinguish original Sony Ericsson mobile sets, buyers should look for the hologram sticker on the package. He also added that they are planning to launch a mass awareness campaign against fake products.



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A tailback in front of the Viqarunnessa School at Bailey Road yesterday.

The same old tale of tailback at Bailey Road

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

On any fairly working day, if you have any business around the Bailey Road at noon, always be sure to start early from home. It would be wise to keep at least extra 30 minutes in your schedule because from around 12pm to 1pm the area surrounding the Bailey Road remains choked-up with traffic.

The reason behind the gridlock is mainly due to the parked cars near the Viqarunnessa School and College. During school hours both sides of the streets remain occupied with parked cars.

The situation worsens around noon when the first shift ends and second shift starts. Drivers coming to pick up and drop off the students park the cars haphazardly near the entrance, narrowing the Bailey Road.

Although Bailey Road is a one-way street, school coaches go both ways, adding to the nuisance, increasing misery of the commuters and thereby affecting the entire surrounding area.

Areas stretching from Bailey Road, Monowara hospital area, Ramna Police Station, Magbazar intersection, Bara Magbazar wirelessgate, alleys near Mouchak and Shiddheshwari are seriously affected by the jam. Locals blame the school authority for not taking necessary measures to end the problem.

During noon rickshaws and CNG auto rickshaws decline to go around the school area. If at all they do, one must pay almost double the usual fare.

Farhana Yasmin, a homemaker from Nayatola, Maghbazar is one of the victims of this terrible traffic jam. She

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city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"I never did any household work. You know I am suffering from arthritis. May I have my personal servant to do my works?"

-- Khaleda Zia
BNP Chairperson

Told the inspector general of prison while stepping inside the lavish Speaker's house-turned-sub-jail complete with central air conditioning system after her arrest on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"So, what they [government] mean by indoor politics? There should be guidelines specifying which activities can be done in the context of the ban on indoor politics and whether the ban is lifted or relaxed. Then we can understand what indoor politics is."

-- ATM Shamsul Huda
Chief Election Commissioner

Told a press briefing in view of the ongoing political activities at the Election Commission Secretariat, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"... Is there no restriction for him?"

-- Khandakar Delwar Hossain
Newly appointed secretary general of BNP

Told reporters at a press briefing at his NAM apartment on how Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was able to call a meeting amid the state of emergency, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

"There is a big gap between what's being said and what's being done; as a result the business community is confused."

-- MA Rouf Chowdhury
Director, Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Said while talking about a 'climate of fear' existing in the business community due to an 'overzealous' anti-corruption drive at a high level dialogue between government and business leaders at a hotel, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

"I think all, including the Dhaka University teachers, were sincere to resolve the problem."

-- Justice Habibur Rahman Khan
Head of the judicial probe commission for investigating the recent violence on the DU campus

Told reporters while visiting DU gymnasium as a part of his task, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"It is the politicians who have violated the constitution. But the caretaker government will do its work as per the constitution."

-- Mainul Hossain
Law Adviser

Told reporters seeking government view on President Iajuddin Ahmed's stay in his post until the election of his successor, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"The jail authority is cooking food for both Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina together for the sake of convenience."

-- Major Shamsul Haider
DIG (prisons)

Told reporters, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star
Compiled by Durdana Ghias