

Poultry trade sees ray of hope

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Poultry traders in the port city receive a ray of hope again with the increased sale of eggs and chickens since early this week after the business facing a severe crisis during the last two months due to avian influenza in the region.

But most of the small traders who were forced to shut their farms due to poor trade since middle of last year need government support to resume their business.

While visiting different kitchen markets in the city on Friday and Sunday, sale of chickens and eggs was seen gaining a momentum once again.

Abu Bakar Khan of Hen's Garden at Karnaphuli Market said they used to sell 300 to 400 kilograms of chickens a day before the bird flu outbreak that plummeted to 50kg to 60kg last month.

He said the sale has started increasing significantly since March 6.

Bakar said they have sold 120kg chickens on Friday and the number of customers is increasing gradually though consumption of chicken at functions like marriage is not noteworthy.

A total of 437 broiler farms, 153 layer farms and 10 hatcheries are registered in the district, sources at the District Livestock Office said.

But, the poultry owners said the unofficial number of broiler farms is over 5000 while that of layer farms over 800.

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A poultry farm at Enayet Bazar in the port city.

Around 70 per cent of the broiler and layer farms have been shut in the district over the last few months due to price hike of poultry feed and poor business and the bird-flu scare has worsened the situation, sources said.

Traders of seven hatcheries, out of 19, have suspended

their business so far, they said.

The poultry industry that has an investment of over Tk 5000 crore in the district had so far incurred a loss of over Tk 500 crore due to bird flu, said Nurul Islam, a member of Poultry Industries Coordination Committee Chittagong unit.

It also rendered some 13,000 people involved with the business jobless, he added.

According to the poultry farm owners,

The situation started worsening since September last year when the prices of different poultry feed like bhutta (maize), Soya meal, different

vitamins and mineral items, marked a rise in the international market.

Mohammad Yunus, a layer farm trader, said price of maize has increased to Tk 18 per kg from Tk 10 per kg and soya meal to Tk 37 a kg from Tk 18 to Tk 20 a kg.

Traders said they have suf-

fered much due to low market price of products compared to the production cost.

Nurul Islam, general manager of MM Agha Limited, said they had to sell a day-old-chick (broiler) at Tk 3 against the production cost of Tk 22 over the last few months.

The poultry traders said they had to sell a day-old-layer chick at Tk 2 against the production cost of Tk 20, a one-kg chicken at Tk 75 against Tk 50 and an egg at Tk 3.20 against the production cost of Tk 4.20.

Such a poor business pushed Abdur Rahman to close his 13 farms, including eight broiler farms and five layer farms in the Baluchara area in the city.

Nurul Islam of MM Agha Limited said they usually supply parent chicks to 30 breeding farms throughout the country without any order from them during the last six months.

Besides, they had to suffer a loss of around Tk 5 crore over the last few months due to price hike of feed and other items, he said, adding that the bird flu has only increased the suffering.

Around 32,403 fowls have been culled and 53,570 eggs damaged at eight poultry farms in Chittagong during the bird flu outbreak.

Leaders of the coordination committee urged the government to form a committee to set up new farms and rehabilitate the affected farm owners to start their business anew.

Fate of 600 graft cases uncertain

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Fate of 600 graft cases filed during the now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) has become uncertain due to absence of witnesses under five districts in greater Chittagong.

The cases have been activated again after the merging of BAC with the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The cases were filed in connection with embezzlement of government fund and properties in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and the hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

Many of the cases were filed in the early eighties, the sources at court said.

With the cases proceeding at a snail's pace many of the witnesses, mostly of them are government officials and employees, either died or retired from their service, sources added.

Beside, absence of the court the lawyers and others concerned as well as even the judges of the court in Chittagong had to go to Rangamati, Bandarban, Khagrachhari and Cox's Bazar for recording deposition of the witnesses on the scheduled dates of hearing in connection with the cases.

A six-member team, including a judge, went to Cox's Bazar last month to conduct hearing of 10 cases

while four witnesses in two cases appeared before the court to make deposition, said the sources.

The team conducted hearing in 14 cases in Rangamati on January 31 this year when only three witnesses of three cases appeared.

Same situation prevailed in the other districts about the other cases, they said.

Special Public Prosecutor Advocate Mohammad Saleh Zahur said the government initiative to speed up the cases is very little since absence of witnesses hampers the proceeding.

Most of the witnesses have either become very old or died while many were transferred elsewhere, he said.

"As such the 'witness warrant' the court issues hardly reach the witnesses or get response," said the special PP.

He said a rule to allow the witnesses to make deposition at nearby courts with the consent of the court concerned would help solve the problem to some extent.

Sources said disposal of the cases would have earned the government a handsome amount of money that convicts are bound to return.

The proceedings of the cases slowed down further after the dissolution of BAC with the formation of ACC, sources said.

The cases have been activated after a directive of the law and home ministries 10 months ago, sources added.

theweekthatwas

Sandhani distributes Hepatitis B vaccine

Sandhani, Chittagong Medical College (CMC) unit gave Hepatitis-b vaccine to 250 people on Friday at a cheaper rate.

Speakers at a daylong vaccination programme said the children are being attacked with the hepatitis B in a large scale.

About two to five lakh newborn babies are born with diseases and later they bear the diseases like hepatitis B, liver cirrhosis, liver cancer and other dangerous diseases, they said.

Sandhani President Muhammad Irfanul Alam, Publicity Secretary Mohammad Shariful Islam Sajib, Finance Secretary Tareq Imam, Habibullah Tamal, Dr Nadim and Dr Shuvo were present in the programme.

Physicians on Friday called upon the people to extend their helping hands to help the epilepsy patients for leading a normal life.

They were addressing a meeting organised by Sanofi-aventis

Bangladesh, a medicine manufacturing company, for creating awareness on epilepsy at a city hotel.

Iftekarul Islam, managing director of the company, Prof Khokan Kanti Das, Dr Mohammad Hasanuzzaman and Prof Mahmud A Chowdhury Arzu spoke at the meeting.

Speakers said epilepsy is a disease and nothing but a physical problem.

"They said an epilepsy patient can lead a normal life if he or she gets cooperation from society, siblings, neighbours and teachers.

Bangladesh Cricket Team Captain Mohammad Ashraf and Vice Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza attended the meeting to encourage the patients.

'Save Halda river'

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon President and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad underscored the need for permanent solution to Halda river, the natural fish-breeding centre, through scientific analysis.

"Halda is not only a river but a mega industry. Government should take proper initiative in this regard," he said.

He was addressing as the chief guest a view exchange meeting on "Way of Saving Halda River" jointly organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon and Nawzuwan, a non-

government organisation, on the Madina Shopping premises at Madunaghat under Hathazari upazila on Thursday.

Economist Prof Dr Sikandar Khan was the main speaker at the meeting with Raozan Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammad Jasim Uddin in the chair.

Chittagong University teacher Mohammad Manjurul Kibria, Nawzuwan Chief Executive Mohammad Imam Hossain, journalist Mohammad Ali, Hathazari UNO Helal Mahmud Sharif, Paribesh Andolon General Secretary Dr Abdul Matin, Raozan Municipality Chairman Shafiqul Islam Chowdhury and Hathazari Press Club Vice-president Shimul Mahajan spoke at the meeting.

The speakers called upon the government to declare the river as the world heritage and placed some recommendations, including steps to save the mother fishes and fish fries, develop the livelihood of the local people, dredge the river, make alternative source of income for the fishermen and create awareness among the locals.

6 bankers awarded

Six managers of Sonali Bank Chittagong (Northern Region), have been awarded for the year 2007 on the basis of business at their branches at the Managers' Conference at Sonali Bank Bhaban at

Agrabad on Thursday.

Chittagong Divisional General Manager MA Baten Khan was the chief guest at the conference with Deputy General Manager Masrurul Huda Sirazi in the chair.

The recipients of the award are Khatunganj Branch Assistant General Manager SM Abul Kalam Azad, Court Hill Branch Manager Manir Ahmed, Fatikchhari Branch Manager Mohammad Rafiqul Kader Talukder, Chaktai Branch Manager Mohammad Harun, Jamal Khan Road Branch Manager Mohammad Nurun Nabi and Kalurghat Industrial Area Branch Manager Mohammad Abdur Rahman.

Chittagong Northern Region Deputy General Manager Nani Gopal Nath and Assistant General Manager KJM Omar Faruk also attended the conference.

Separate budget for women demanded

Speakers at a rally on Saturday stressed the need for introducing a separate national budget to solve the problems of women in the country.

It will ensure the participation of women in national policies, planning and programmes, they said while they were addressing a rally organised by Institute for Environment and Development (IED), Chittagong

Centre to mark the International Women's Day on the Chittagong Shaheed Minar premises.

Ward Commissioners Shahidul Alam, Eyachhin Chowdhury, Rekha Alam, Rehena Kabir Ranu, Afroza Kamal, Monwara Begum Moni, cultural organiser Rashed Hasan and social worker Jahangir Mostafa spoke at the rally with IED, Chittagong Centre Manager Mohammad Ferdous Ahmed in the chair.

The speakers also put up some other demands including separate and full-fledge ministry for women and budget for running the ministry properly, investment for women empowerment, and allocation for encouraging medium and small entrepreneurs and developing them as skilled manpower through education and training.

Earlier, a colourful procession was also brought out from Chittagong Press Club that paraded the main thoroughfares of the city.

'Fight poverty to eradicate corruption'

Speakers on Friday urged the people to fight the poverty to eradicate corruption from the society.

They said everybody will have to increase their income and buying



Increasing number of rickshaws often adds to traffic jam in the port city. The photo was taken from busy Bahodderhat intersection on Sunday.

capacity to resist corruption.

They were addressing a certificate giving ceremony of a training course on sewing jointly organised by Raozan Club and Rotary Club at Raozan Shishu Sadan and Matri Sadan auditorium.

Centre for Good Governance (CGG) Chairman Prof Syed Ahsanul Alam Parvez was the chief guest at the ceremony with Raozan Club Lifetime Member Mohammad Taslim Uddin in the chair.

Chittagong University teacher Muhammad Tayub Chowdhury, also

charter president of Rotary Club of Chittagong Sagonika, was present as the special guest.

Books distributed among school students

Mostafa Hakim Welfare Foundation distributed books among the students of different schools in the South and Middle Halishahar areas in the port city on Wednesday.

The Foundation Executive Director and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Acting Mayor M Manjur Alam handed over the books among the students at the ceremony.

Local Ward Commissioner Abul Hashem presided over the function at Ahmed Mian City Corporation Girls' High School auditorium.

Woman Ward Commissioner Afroza Kalam, Headmistress Ferdous Ara and former Commissioner Nurul Alam also spoke at the ceremony.



Bangladesh National Cricket team skipper Mohammad Ashraf gives away a crest to a physically challenged child at a prize giving ceremony of talent hunt programme titled Protibandhi Prativa Annyeshon '08 jointly organised by HSBC and Centre for Disabled Concern (CDC) at Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) auditorium on Saturday.



Recipients of gold medal pose for photograph with social scientist Dr Anupam Sen and revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury at a reception marking the silver jubilee celebration of Aboshar Sangskritik Gosthi on the DC Hill premises on Saturday. Twelve scholars of Chittagong received the medals at the reception.