

# Frozen food exporters target Tk 10b earnings by 2013

BSS, Chittagong

Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) has targeted Tk 10,000 crore from exports of frozen foods by 2013.

Frozen food exporters, mostly the members of the BFFEA, earned Tk 3,180.80 crore in fiscal year 2008-09, 20.83 percent lower than the previous year due to the global recession.

"But with the recovery trend of the global economy, the demand for frozen foods in the world market has started going up again," said Mohammad Musa Mia, BFFEA president.

He is optimistic about the bright prospects of frozen food export and believes that the country can fetch Tk 10,000 crore from this sector.

The main item of the frozen food is prawn, but the demand for shrimp in the global market is also on the rise.

Musa said the export earnings could be increased substantially by bringing the production and processing of the fish under the latest technology.

The demand for shrimp is increasing in global markets including the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and some Asian and Middle-eastern countries.

At present, farmers are producing prawn on 1.70 lakh hectares of land.

The sectoral trade body chief suggested the government bring more two lakh hectares of land under shrimp and prawn production in the coastal area.

To meet the increasing demand, he also suggested expansion of prawn production in Sylhet, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Jessor, Patuakhali and Barisal.

The farmers in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong and Khulna are now the main producers of prawn and shrimp for export.

# World will need 70pc more food in 2050: FAO

AFP, Rome

World food production must increase by 70 percent by 2050, to nourish a human population then likely to be 9.1 billion, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation forecast Wednesday.

"FAO is cautiously optimistic about the world's potential to feed itself by 2050," said FAO Assistant Director-General Hafez Ghanem. However, he stressed that feeding everyone in the world by then "will not be automatic and several significant challenges have to be met."

The agency is preparing for a high-level expert forum in Rome on October 12-13 on "How to Feed the World in 2050" and plans to gather 300 specialists from a academic, non-governmental and private sector institutions.

This forum will pave the way for a World Summit on Food Security in Rome on November 16-18.

The world population is expected to grow from 6.8 billion today to 9.1 billion in 2050, according to the latest UN forecast.

"Nearly all of the population growth will occur in developing countries. Sub-Saharan Africa's population is expected to grow the

fastest (up 108 percent, 910 million people), and East and South East Asia's the slowest (up 11 percent, 228 million).

"Around 70 percent of the world population will live in cities or urban areas by 2050, up from 49 percent today," the document said.

The demand for food is expected to grow as a result of rising incomes as well as population growth, the discussion paper added. Cereal production will have to increase by almost a billion tonnes from 2.1 billion today and meat production will have to grow by more than 200 million tonnes to reach a total of 470 million tonnes in 2050.

The FAO estimated that the production of biofuels could also increase the demand for agricultural commodities, depending on energy prices and government policies."

More land will be needed for crops "despite the fact that 90 percent of the growth in crop production is projected to come from higher yields and increased cropping intensity."

The FAO estimated that "arable land will have to expand by around 120 million hectares in developing countries," mainly in

Africa and Latin America, while "arable land in use in developed countries is expected to decline by some 50 million hectares, although this could be changed by the demand for biofuels."

Globally, there is still enough land to feed the future world population, but much of the potential land is suitable for growing only a few crops, and the FAO warned of other difficulties, such as chemical and physical constraints, endemic diseases and a lack of infrastructure.

Overcoming such problems will require "significant investments," the FAO said, adding that some countries in the Near East, north Africa and South Asia "have already reached or are about to reach the limits of land available."

The FAO expects water withdrawals for irrigated agriculture to grow by almost 11 percent by 2050.

The world has enough fresh water resources, but "they are very unevenly distributed and water scarcity will reach alarming levels in an increasing number of countries or regions within countries, particularly in the Near East/North Africa and South Asia."

India's inflation gained pace, fuelled by a massive leap in food prices on the back of the worst drought in decades, official data showed Thursday.

Annual inflation rose by a faster-than-expected 0.37 percent for the week ended September 12, according to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), India's most-watched cost-of-living benchmark.

The figure was up from a 0.12 percent gain the previous week.

Economists had forecast about a 0.30 percent increase in the inflation rate.

The rise came as overall prices of raw food items climbed by a hefty 15.64 percent, driven mainly by a 44.85 percent rise in vegetable prices.

Earlier this week, weather data showed that India's monsoon was about 20 percent below strength just over a week before the official end of the rainy season, putting the country on course for its worst drought since 1972.

Low rainfall early in the monsoon period hit India's rice, cane sugar and groundnut crops, threatening to cause shortages.

The drought is expected to dampen India's economic growth this year and has sent food prices rocketing, leading to huge hardship for India's poor masses.

The resurfacing of inflation has confronted the central bank with a dilemma about when to take the first steps to tighten monetary policy to keep a lid on prices.

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