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Fish stock set to crash

Experts ring alarm bell over 50pc over-fishing in Bay; fisheries head calls for study

INAM AHMED and SOHEL PARVEZ

Some 44,000 fishing boats and 147 trawlers skim the Bay of Bengal every day with sea-floor-scraping nets that scoop up everything in its way, and experts fear this over-fishing by about 50 percent will be "disastrous" for fish stocks. Fishermen and trawling companies agree that their catches are declining. "Fish living at the bottom of the sea, or demersal stock, is deteriorating," said a senior official of a commercial trawling firm, seeking to remain unnamed.

"We caught 4-5 tonnes of demersal fish a day in 2002-03. But the quantity of catches has dropped to 2-2.5 tonnes a day now."

The official also said shrimp catches have also declined on each trip. The total catch increased in the last decade. But it is because far more boats and trawlers ply the waters.

In fiscal year 2008-09, 5.14 lakh tonnes of fish was caught off the bay, up from 3.33 lakh tonnes in 1999-2000, Department of Fisheries statistics show. During this time, the number of trawlers has gone up fivefold, according to Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association data.

Fishing boats operating illegally and rule-bending new trawlers hitting the water make the future of stocks even more precarious.

Of 21,433 mechanised boats counted, 83 percent are fishing illegally, according to the DoF. These boats are more damaging to future stocks as

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Fishermen exploiting the Bay in small boats near Dublar Char in Khulna.

PHOTO: STAR

Terminators thrive with trial licence

INAM AHMED and SOHEL PARVEZ

It all completed within just six days.

On June 2, Mominur Rahman Munshi, proprietor of HM International, claimed to have marine parts business, filed a writ with the High Court seeking directives for the government to award marine fishing licence for his fishing boat-turned vessel.

The triumph for the petitioner came on June 8.

On that day, the HC asked the government to allow Munshi's trawler to catch fish in the Bay of Bengal on a trial basis [per trip 14 days] for a period of three months beginning from the date of jurisdiction.

With the permission, the vessel joined a fleet of more than 50 trawlers, each having the go-ahead in almost similar fashion to fish in the Bay, the stock of which is feared to have been threatened for over-fishing.

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Last decade the warmest of century

States a climate report

BSS, Dhaka

The last decade (2000-2009) was the warmest decade of this century, said the 2009 State of the Climate report released by US-based National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Each of the last three decades has been much

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No Ulfa camp in Bangladesh

Detained leader Ranjan tells interrogators

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) does not have any training camp or base in Bangladesh, although its operatives often cross border to take shelter here.

Members of the Indian separatist group who escaped to Bangladesh following their high command's instruction were tasked with managing shelter for others whenever they cross border in the face of tougher situations.

Those who sustain injuries during fights with Indian forces or suffer from malaria are also given treatment in Bangladesh.

These were revealed by detained Ulfa leader Ranjan Chowdhury as he was quizzed by the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI), according to interrogators and an interrogation statement obtained by The Daily Star.

"Ranjan told us that as far as his knowledge goes, Ulfa has no training camp or base in

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British murder suspect held in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion yesterday held a British citizen of Pakistani origin, who is accused of killing two persons in London.

A senior Rab official told The Daily Star they picked up Ayub Khan, 50, from the city's Airport Road at around 11:30am while he was going to the airport from a hotel near Dhaka cantonment.

The arrest was made on a red

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Dhaka to pen \$1b loan from India today

Pranab to witness signing, review deals on arrival

REZAUL KARIM

Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee arrives in Dhaka this afternoon on a brief visit to witness the signing of \$1 billion credit facility by EXIM Bank of India and Bangladesh to finance 14 infrastructure related projects.

It would be the first visit by a key Indian leader since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India on January 10-13.

During his three and a half-hour visit, Pranab will call on Sheikh Hasina, his counterpart AMA Muhith and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni to review the implementation of the agreements reached between the two countries during the PM's visit.

India seems satisfied with Bangladesh as it has helped with India's security issues by cooperating with Indian law enforcers to tackle its northeastern region's separatist groups, including Ulfa, said official sources.

"Pranab is scheduled to visit Bangladesh on August 7. He will arrive at 4pm and depart at 7:30pm. Though the visit is brief it is very important as he is a key leader of ruling Congress party," a foreign ministry official said, adding that Pranab was coming on an invitation by Dipu Moni.

After arriving, he is scheduled to meet the foreign minister at state guesthouse Jamuna followed by a meeting with the



Pranab Mukherjee

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Don't sign loan deal with Indian bank

BNP asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP yesterday asked the government not to sign any loan agreement with Exim Bank of India.

"Countrymen knew that the Indian government would provide the loan. But now Bangladesh is going to sign an agreement with Exim Bank of India for a loan of 1 billion dollars, which is disgraceful," the party said in a statement read out at a press conference at the chairperson's Gulshan office.

The loan deal is scheduled to be inked today with Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in attendance.

BNP claimed Bangladesh is going to take the loan with 1.75 percent interest while such loan is available from any multinational bank at only .25 percent interest.

Former minister MK Anwar, also a member of BNP standing committee, read out the statement.

Party standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan, Vice-chairman Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury and chairperson's adviser Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury were,

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KAMALAPUR TRAGEDY

Rajani joins kid brother in death

Her mother to be sued for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight-year-old Rajani Akhter died early yesterday like her brother did late Thursday at the ICU of the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Her mother Bilashi Akhter, 28, had set fire to herself, Rajani and her four-year-old brother Abu Raihan at their

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With 90 percent of her body burned, Rajani at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Thursday. She succumbed to her injuries yesterday around 6:00am.

PHOTO: STAR

One killed in 'shootout' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in a "shootout" between his cohorts and members of the Rapid Action Battalion early yesterday at Sayedabad in the capital.

The deceased, Anwar Hossain alias Pichchi Anwar, hailed from Arahazar upazila in Narayanganj district.

Rab and police officials said he was a top-listed criminal accused in at least 10 cases on murder, robbery, loot and

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