

Fishermen defy ban on shrimp fry catch in Ctg

MINHAJ UDDIN, Chittagong

Defying a government ban, hundreds of fishermen catch wild shrimp fries in the coastal areas of Chittagong in a mindless act that kills fries of other fish species as well.

The Department of Fisheries in a survey found that 75 to 100 fries of other species get killed in attempts to catch every shrimp fry, said Kamal Uddin Chowdhury, Chittagong district fisheries officer.

The government in 2000 banned catching of wild shrimp fries during the peak season from March to July.

In 2013, the government also imposed a ban on the use of bag nets in the peak catching season.

On a recent visit to a coastal area from the port city's Patenga to Halishahar, this correspondent found hundreds of catchers sorting out fries from their catches and dumping fries of other species.

Most fry catchers are landless people from the coastal areas of Khulna, Bagerhat, Noakhali, Hatia and Kutubdia.

Abdul Aziz, a 70-year-old fisherman from Hatia, said they set the funnel-shaped nets in the beach.

Fries of different species of fishes, including shrimp, swim into the bag nets during high tide, when fishes are caught twice a day. Bag nets prevent even smallest fries from escaping.

Each fisherman catches 300 to 500 shrimp fries a day and sells them at Tk 3 each. Some businessmen buy the fries and resell them to



PRABIR DAS

Fishermen sort out shrimp fries from their catch at Patenga sea beach in Chittagong.

shrimp farms in Khulna.

Around 10 lakh fries are collected from the area every day, said Akkas Uddin, a shrimp fry trader based in South Halishahar who collects fries from Patenga to Halishahar area.

Probbhati Dev, district fisheries officer, said they are conducting regular drives to stop shrimp

fry catching as it has adverse impacts on nature by reducing the species of fishes and hampering sea biodiversity.

The officer said they have seized around 20 lakh shrimp fries from Chittagong city in April 2014 and two cases were filed against three persons who were caught red-handed.

Budget to be friendly to trade, industry: NBR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The budget for the coming fiscal year will be friendly to trade, industry and consumers, the National Board of Revenue Chairman Md Ghulam Hussain said yesterday.

The budget for 2014-15, first of the incumbent government, will reflect what it will do in the next five years, Hussain.

Hussain spoke at a meeting with the business leaders of the port city. Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised the meeting in Chittagong.

The NBR aims to collect Tk 149,000 crore in taxes in the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Chittagong Chamber President Mahbubul Alam presented their recommendations for the coming budget.

Later, Hussain met the leaders of Chittagong Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The chamber's President Khalilur Rahman and Vice President Mahbub Chowdhury were present there.



VIYELLATEX

Bibi Russell, fashion designer, and officials of Viyellatex attend a ceremony recently to mark their partnership to develop designing capability for Viyellatex and to promote Bibi Russell's collection.

ICAB gets new secretary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

AKM Rahmat Ullah has joined the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) as its secretary on Thursday, ICAB said in a statement yesterday.

Prior to the new appointment, he has been working as general manager for accounts and budgeting in Bangladesh Bank.

He also served as financial management specialist (consultant) in the IDA Project, as a general manager of Social Development Foundation under the finance ministry and as a deputy director for audit in Bangladesh Open University.

A fellow member of ICAB, he completed his masters in accounting from Dhaka University in 1981.



Stocks begin the week in red

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks opened the week in the red, as investors lost their confidence due to unattractive corporate declarations by some listed companies.

DSEX, the benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, lost 62 points or 1.35 percent finishing the day at 4,504.77 points.

DSES, the shariah index of the premier bourse, also declined 12 points or 1.19 percent to close at

1,006.07.

"Depressed earnings shook investors' sentiment severely during yesterday's session," said IDLC Investments.

Besides, the merchant bank said in its regular market analysis that condensed panic of a further fall followed the negative tone.

Lankabangla Securities said the investors' sentiment was trembling over the mixed corporate declarations.

Dhaka Bank reelects chairman



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Abdul Hai Sarker has recently been reelected as the chairman of Dhaka Bank, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Sarker is the chairman of Purbani Group and a former president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, former vice chairman of Bangladesh Association of Banks, and former director of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He is also an associate director of International Cotton Association based in Liverpool, UK.

He has also been accorded Commercially Important Person status by the government.

Ruposhi Bangla to remain shut for one year

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He said 2012 will be the base year to calculate their salaries and other benefits, including service charges.

In 2012, the five-star hotel logged revenues of Tk 125.26 crore, while its gross operating profit was Tk 53.81 crore and net profit Tk 46.51 crore. In February 2012, InterContinental Hotels Group, a leading global hotel chain, signed an agreement with Bangladesh Services Ltd, which owns Ruposhi Bangla Hotel, to take over the operations and management of the hotel.

A condition of the deal was that the hotel would undergo extensive renovations and then be handed over to InterContinental for a period of 30 years.

Bangladesh Services will bear the renovation cost of around Tk 400 crore -- a portion from its own funds and the rest from bank loans.

After taking the operations and management charges, InterContinental will share profit with Bangladesh Services.

In line with the renovation plan, McDonald said, the number of rooms will come down to 226 from 272 as the size of a room will be increased to 40 square metres from 26 square metres now.

The dining hall and swimming pool will be relocated while some added services and benefits will be offered, he said.

InterContinental had earlier run the iconic Dhaka hotel from 1966 to 1983. Sheraton took over its operations and management in 1983 for 25 years that ended in December 2008.

The government requested Sheraton to continue the operation until April 30, 2011 for the ICC Cricket World Cup.

Starwood, the mother company of Sheraton, gave Bangladesh Services a conditional extension offer in 2009, but there was a disagreement between Starwood and the Bangladesh Services authorities over the renovation cost and the fate of the employees. Eventually, Bangladesh Services took over the hotel's operations, renaming it Ruposhi Bangla Hotel.

CPD opposes plans for corporate tax cuts

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Tax holiday privileges provided to selected sectors need to be assessed from an efficiency point of view: whether it will be more preferable to go for selected 'strategically' and 'potentially' important sectors.

CPD said the government may also consider a number of fiscal measures for a set of targeted industries.

For instance, an increase in the exemption limit for VAT for SMEs from the existing Tk 80 lakh to Tk 1 crore, reduction of import duty on raw materials for the furniture and pharmaceutical sectors and withdrawal of import duty on networking machinery and data transmission link.

About public investment, the government should strengthen its monitoring activities to ensure speedy implementation of fast-tracked projects like the Dhaka-Chittagong four-lane highway, eleven large-scale power plants, expansion of gas connection in the industrial zones, completion of the Leather City in Savar and relocation of factories from Hazaribagh.

CPD found that there is a significant

gap between the grower and retail level prices of agricultural produces. In order to ensure a fair price, it recommended setting up an agriculture price commission with adequate resource allocation.

A food safety authority should be set up to implement food safety rules and regulations.

CPD said the government should establish information technology centres across rural areas with funds from development partners.

These centres should have computers with high-speed internet connection and be openly accessible to the rural population.

The think-tank also called for an increase in overall allocation to social protection programmes.

It said a number of studies indicate that less than half of the eligible poor are receiving social benefit in Bangladesh. In view of this, the number of beneficiaries will need to be increased.

The administration of social safety net schemes needs to be rationalised and consolidated as well.

Eight steel silos by 2017

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Land requirement for these silos will be low, and the nutritional quality of the stored grain will be retained through computerised control of humidity and temperature. Operating costs of the silos will also be low, along with higher operational efficiency, Khan said.

Countries such as Thailand, USA, India and Turkey have such steel silos. These feature online weight measures, rice cleaners, handling equipment with chains and conveyor belt and bucket elevators.

Small silos will be constructed in coastal and flash-flood zones, each with 100kg storage capacity,

to help 5 lakh families store rice to use in times of disaster.

Under the scheme, the government also plans to establish nationwide electronic monitoring system for food stocks to ensure leak-proof supply management.

It will enable policymakers to monitor invoices, procurement, market prices and stock situation online, Khan said.

Christine Kimes, acting country head of World Bank Bangladesh, said the modern food storage silos are a new generation scheme that will support digitised monitoring of food distribution and procurement in an integrated manner.

Set up more health centres for workers: BILS

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"If we can modernise the existing welfare centres and ensure the presence of doctors and nurses and the availability of medicines, and set up more such centres in areas with many garment factories, we will be able to provide health care facilities to the workers."

Ahmed spoke at a seminar organised by BILS in association with the labour and employment ministry to mark May Day at National Press Club. The discussion particularly highlighted the group life insurance scheme the government recently launched for workers in the construction and automobile sectors.

Last year, the government initiated a five-year insurance scheme for workers in the construction and automobile sector to provide financial security to the injured labourers and families of the dead labourers in the event of an accident or death.

Monirul Islam Khan, professor of sociology at Dhaka University, who presented a paper, said steps have to be taken to popularise the insurance scheme among workers.

"The willingness of the owners will have to be ensured. Besides, installment has to be affordable for the workers. If necessary, a government fund should be formed."

Ahmed backed Khan, saying there are many misconceptions among the public in general and the workers in particular about the insurance industry.

Mikail Shipar, labour secretary, who helped craft the insurance scheme, said the government also plans to introduce a pension-like old-age allowance for workers in the informal sector.

About 26 lakh people are involved in the construction sector, according to the Labour Force Survey of 2010, said Khan of Dhaka University.

He said four out of five workers get wages on a daily basis and they do not get appointment letters and other

benefits entitled by the labour law. They rely on contractors for work and their monthly wage ranges between Tk 4,000 and Tk 10,000.

There is also discrepancy between the wages of a male worker and a female worker, Khan said.

Khan's paper shows 95 workers died in 2013 due mainly to fall from high-rise buildings, building collapse and electrification.

The study also found 43,992 workers are involved with 186 trade unions in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. But this represents less than 2 percent of the country's total workforce in the transport sector.



LOTTO

Abdullah Al Mosaddak, Lotto Bangladesh chief executive, attends the inauguration of the Italian brand's outlet at New Market in Chittagong recently. Kazi Jamil Islam, managing director, was also present.



ECSTASY

Asha Haque, chairman of Ecstasy, attends the inauguration of the brand's 20th outlet at Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka recently. Tanjim Haque, managing director, was also present. The outlet on over 10,000 square feet has a wide range of branded clothes and accessories from global fashion.



ICCB

Aatur Rahman, secretary general of International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh, and Ajay B Saha, deputy general manager, pose with the officials of Bangladesh banks and Bangladesh Bank at an ICC workshop on rules and tools for international trade finance, in Kuala Lumpur recently.