

Call on Myanmar, Bangladesh, India to conserve hilsa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh, India and Myanmar must work together for better conservation, production and management of hilsa, as they produce more than 90 percent of global production, said officials at a regional seminar in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh alone produces 60 percent, India 20 percent and Myanmar 15 percent of total hilsa in the world, they added.

There must be a proper trans-boundary unique management system involving the governments concerned for conservation of hilsa spawning; otherwise production cannot be boosted up, they observed at the first day of a two-day regional seminar.

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Darwin Initiative of the UK, and the Department of Fisheries (DoF) were the joint organisers of the seminar held at a hotel in the capital.

They aimed at focusing on a number of issues including ecological, biological and socioeconomic assessment for sustainable management of hilsa fisheries.

Utpal Bhaumik, former divisional head of Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute for the West Bengal government of India, observed that installation of a barrage at Farakka has completely intercepted the Hooghly-Bhagirathi migratory route of hilsa since 1975.

"A complete ban on hilsa fishing in and around 10km radius of the breeding ground at least during October-November should be enforced or to be declared as sanctuary. During this period designated hilsa fishers need to be given adequate compensation by the governments for their livelihood," he added.

Without resolving fishermen's hardships, enforcement activities cannot be successful to increase

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Members of Bangladesh Coast Guard last month seized 800kgs of jatka (hilsa fry less than 9 inches long) from the Dhaleshwari river in Munshiganj. The coast guard routinely monitors and conducts such drives to prevent fishermen from catching jatka.

PHOTO: FILE

Zero tolerance

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energy sector, the PM sought support from Kuwait as it has vast expertise and experience in energy resources.

The Kuwaiti PM expressed his inclination to extend support to Bangladesh in energy exploration. He added that Bangladesh and Kuwait could work jointly for exploration of oil and gas resources in the Bay of Bengal.

A proposal was also made to discuss the manpower export to Kuwait at joint working group level, as around 2,00,000 Bangladeshi workers are currently employed in the Arab country.

Expressing satisfaction at the existing defence cooperation between the two countries, the Kuwaiti side lauded the standards of the defence force of Bangladesh and hoped that this defence cooperation would further strengthen in future.

About visa exemption, Hasina urged her Kuwaiti counterpart to take a facilitating role for the holders of general passports.

The foreign secretary said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her last visit to Kuwait sought support of the Kuwaiti government in setting up of an oil refinery in Bangladesh.

"The issue also came up for discussion during the official talks. Two technical delegations of Kuwait have already visited Bangladesh in this regard," he added.

The Kuwaiti premier informed Hasina that the current emir of Kuwait, then the foreign minister of the Gulf state, had escorted Father of the Nation Bahagbandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the OIC Summit held in Lahore in 1974.

Later, the Kuwaiti leader joined a state banquet hosted by Hasina at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

FOUR DEALS SIGNED

Bangladesh and Kuwait yesterday signed four agreements in the fields of investment, military cooperation and road communications.

The instruments were signed after the official talks between the two prime ministers at the Prime Minister's Office

in the afternoon.

The two premiers witnessed the signing of the agreements.

Kuwaiti Minister of Education and Higher Education Bader Hamad Al-Essa and Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu of Bangladesh signed the Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investment on behalf of their respective sides.

"This agreement will open up a new door for investment in Bangladesh," Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque told a press briefing after the signing of the deals.

Kuwaiti Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador Khaled Sueliman Al-Jarallah and Home Ministry Senior Secretary Md Mozammel Haque Khan signed the Agreement on Mutual Exemption of Prior Entry Visa for Holders of Diplomatic, Special and Official Passports.

The agreement on cooperation in military fields of training and other areas was signed by Khaled Sueliman Al-Jarallah and Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Md Mahfuzur Rahman.

The loan agreement between the government of Bangladesh and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) for Financing of Paira Bridge Project was signed by Director General of KFAED Abdulwahab Al-Bader and Economic Relations Division Additional Secretary Mahmuda Begum.

It is the second loan agreement for implementing the Paira Bridge Project. Under the deal, the KFAED will provide a loan amounting to KWD 15 million (Kuwaiti dinar) which is equivalent to \$50 million. Earlier, another loan agreement was also signed with the KFAED on March 13, 2012 for KWD 14 million (\$48 million).

The roads and highways department under the Road Transport and Highways Division of the road transport and bridges ministry is implementing the project.

Govt to watch

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minister said online media would be brought under registration and that work was underway to formulate a guideline in this regard.

In the wake of the recent spate of killings of bloggers, writers, university professors and secular activists,

several ministers earlier said that some people were writing objectionable stuff about different religions and beliefs in the name of secularism.

They warned that the government would not tolerate hurting any religion this way.

Dismembered body of a man found in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Body of a man, severed into eight pieces, was recovered from a house in Krishnapur area of Pabna town Tuesday night.

Law enforcers arrested the victim's cousin from the house in this connection.

The deceased was identified as Akteruzzaman, 32, son of Faruk Molla of Nandia village in Kushtia's Mirpur upazila. He worked as a sales executive of a company in the town.

Arrestee Raheduzzaman, 30, of the same village, lived with Akteruzzaman on the ground floor of the latter's home in Krishnapur, said Abdulla Al Hasan, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station.

The victim's colleagues said the last time Akteruzzaman went to work was on May 2. They informed police about him not showing up for work and his phone being turned off.

Police on Tuesday night went to his home and found Raheduzzaman. They quizzed him over the victim's whereabouts but he failed to give any proper answer, the OC said.

The law enforcers kept on questioning him and at one point he brought the body parts kept in a sack from inside the house, he added.

During primary interrogation, Raheduzzaman admitted that he killed his cousin for Tk 5,000, said Alamgir Kabir, superintendent of Pabna police.

Aktaruzzaman borrowed Tk 5,000 from Raheduzzaman a few days ago. Raheduzzaman had been asking for the money back but he refused to pay, the SP said, quoting the arrestee.

Around 11:00pm on Tuesday, the two locked in an altercation over the money. At one stage, enraged Raheduzzaman smacked Aktaruzzaman on the head with a heavy object, leaving him dead on the spot, he said.

Later, Raheduzzaman cut the body into eight pieces so that he could dump the body easily, the police official added quoting the cousin.

Asked if a person could kill just for Tk 5,000, the SP said the arrestee, during primary interrogation, "confessed to the killing for the money". He, however, said that they were

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Stop driving

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some influential persons, including ministers, civil and high police officials and students, travel on the wrong side causing accidents and congestion.

Under Section 140(2) of The Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983: "Whoever, otherwise than with lawful authority or reasonable excuse, drives or causes to be driven a motor vehicle in opposite direction on one way road or contrary to any notice shall be punishable with fine which may extend to [two hundred] Taka."

The vice-chancellors of Dhaka University, Jagannath University and Jahangirnagar University, cabinet secretary, home secretary, education secretary, inspector general of police (IGP), BRTA chairman, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner and deputy commissioner (traffic) have been made respondents to the rule, Belayet Hossain, a lawyer for the petitioner, told The Daily Star.

BAN ON STICKERS, SIRENS Meanwhile, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday imposed a ban on using stickers on vehicles identifying various professionals, including journalists, lawyers and police.

DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia said they have been conducting drive against the practice since April 24 to curb criminal activities.

"It was seen in the past that criminals used fake stickers on vehicles while committing crime," he told a press briefing at the DMP media centre.

Legal action would be taken against the offenders, he added.

The police chief, however, said employees of different organisations will be allowed to use painted logos and monograms of their respective organisations on vehicles.

When asked under which law the ban is being implemented, he dodged the question and said "Isn't it an offence if you use a police jacket despite not being a police?"

He said police would prevent people from talking over the mobile phone while crossing streets, stop the practice of more than one pillion rider on motorbikes, use of tinted glass, hydraulic horns, sirens and beacons and driving on the wrong side.

The new directives were for easing congestion, said the DMP boss.

The DMP had conducted drives against the use of tinted glass on vehicles in 2014 but left those used by government offices, forces and other public offices out of its drive purview.

It also conducted drives and set up

spike strips on several occasions on roads to stop vehicles going on the wrong side, but it too died out.

They even collected footage only to find a high number of influential people top the list of traffic rules violators.

Briefing reporters yesterday, the DMP commissioner said they issued letters to different government offices in this regard and received positive responses.

He urged city dwellers to assist the DMP to make Dhaka better.

A circular has been issued for police directing them not to use stickers in their private cars, he added.

Asked whether stopping the use of the stickers would put professionals into police harassment, the commissioner said the DMP would take action if allegation was raised against any traffic policeman.

He said lawmakers, their families, employees of the parliament and parliament secretariat and its affiliated departments have to use stickers on their personal vehicles provided by their offices.

He further said in a bid to tackle militant activities police would form "surveillance teams" comprising of local public representatives and police at different wards under the city corporations to detect suspicious activities.

He also said they have collected about 40 lakh forms of tenants' consent for the Interpol team.

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"When a crime takes place through computers or using servers, the criminals delete and destroy a lot of evidence. It is [BB heist] a major incident in Bangladesh where assistance of experts from other countries is required. The Interpol officials will assist the CID officials to recover the evidence," said another CID official, asking not to be named.

On the first day of their three-day visit, the Interpol officials talked to the investigators and inspected the evidence gathered from Bangladesh Bank and elsewhere.

The team, led by Brad Marden, arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday night.

On February 4, hackers stole \$101 million from Bangladesh Bank's account with the Federal Reserve Bank in New York.

CID and BB officials said the \$20 million sent to Sri Lanka was later recovered, while the rest \$81 million went to Philippines.

Luxury car

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through Mongla Port in 2013 declaring it as a 2500cc Audi TT. However, the officials found that it was actually an Audi R8 with a 5200cc engine.

The car was imported from UK for Auto One car showroom in Turag in the capital. The importers paid 451 percent taxes on a falsely claimed price of \$32,441.

The actual price of the R8 was \$162,000 and its tax should have been 841 percent of the price.

"The owner evaded around Tk 8.5 crore in tax with the false declaration," he said, adding that the car was yet to be registered.

Moniul Khan said the owner of the Auto One Sajedur Rahman Sumon had sold it to a person but the person recently returned it to Sumon amidst the Customs Intelligence drive against illegally imported cars.

Sumon was trying to sell the car again.

The official said they would take legal action against the importers and user of the car and also wrote to the NBR to take action against the Mongla Port officials concerned who helped the unscrupulous businessman import the car.

Farmers in trouble

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said the devastating hailstorm damaged crops of 20 villages in his union.

Majedul Islam, agriculture officer of Dirai upazila, said he visited different affected areas in the upazila and saw that flash floods and hailstorms damaged paddy of around 1,000 acres of land in 40 villages.

Nazmul Haque, Dharampasa upazila nirbahi officer, said he asked all the union parishad chairmen to take immediate steps to save paddy in the haor areas.

Fruj Khan, deputy assistant agriculture officer at the Sunamganj agricultural extension department, said paddy of around 29,000 hectares of land was destroyed in the last nine days.

Flash floods were hitting different parts of the haor areas every day. In these circumstances, the agricultural extension department officials asked the farmers to harvest their paddy quickly, said Krishna Chandra, additional director of the Sylhet agricultural extension department.

Paddy of over 9,000 hectares of land in Sylhet was damaged, 600 hectares of land in Moulvibazar, 2,000 hectares in Habiganj and over 37,000 hectares of land in Sunamganj, he added.

Bring ethnic minorities

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Currently, the ministry only looks after the issues of ethnic minorities in the CHT, ignoring that of in the plains, they said.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised the seminar, titled "Engaging Ethnic Minorities in National Development: Way Forward", at its auditorium in the capital.

Prime Minister's Political Affairs Adviser HT Imam, CHT affairs ministry Secretary Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, NDC, BISS Director General Maj Gen (retd) AKM Abdur Rahman, and Dhaka University's history department Prof Mesbah Kamal, among others, spoke at the programme.

Prof Syed Anwar Hussain of the same department presented the keynote paper.

HT Imam said the government was very actively working for the development of the ethnic minorities. "We should do much more to engage them [ethnic minorities] in national development. I can tell you this government is deliberately trying to do that."

He said they were focusing on the

empowerment of the ethnic minority communities in Bangladesh.

Imam also said the government would make special efforts to look after all those people who are backward and under poverty line in a bid to take them forward for creating a level-playing field for all citizens and ensure balanced development.

In his keynote papers, Prof Anwar said the government should take well-thought-out plans to integrate the ethnic minorities with the country's overall development process. "Development should not be confused with growth. Development addresses problems of all the people of the country."

He said a good strategic communication policy would pave the way for full implementation of the long-awaited peace treaty.

The teacher said the parliamentary standing committee on the CHT Affairs could hold a public hearing on the issue.

He also suggested that the authorities concerned should engage in talks with the CHT people for resolving their land ownership and national identity problems.

Two Bangladeshis win special prize

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from the UK and started studying higher mathematics in Cambridge (2003). Dipankar completed his third master's from the University of Washington and then he received the PhD degree in 2012 from the same university. The topic of his PhD research was also about black holes and gravitational waves.

He is now working for Oregon University's LIGO collaboration team.

Born in 1964, Selim had his schooling in Pabna and passed the HSC from Dhaka College. Then he studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Selim Shahriar is now a professor both at the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and Physics and Astronomy at the Northwestern University, USA.

He leads the experimental portion of Northwestern University's chapter of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration, the international consortium that made the groundbreaking discovery.

Shahriar searched for ways to improve the sensitivity of the LIGO detectors and broaden the spectrum

over which the detectors are sensitive. His group has identified a technique that improved sensitivity.

Shahriar is also working on a second technique that uses atomic clocks that are placed on other planets and celestial bodies to enable the detection of gravitational waves in a different and very important part of the spectrum.

Northwestern University website said, "Up until now, astronomers have only been able to explore the universe using light. Detecting gravitational waves gives them another tool for astronomical exploration that could potentially reveal what happened within the very moments that the universe was born."

The Selection Committee of the Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics announced the prize winners on May 2.

The \$3 million award will be shared between two groups of laureates: the three founders of LIGO, who will each equally share \$1 million; and 1012 contributors to the experiment, who will each equally share \$2 million.

The founders are Ronald WP Drever,

Caltech, professor of physics, emeritus; Kip S Thorne, Caltech, the Feynman Professor of Theoretical Physics, emeritus; and Rainer Weiss, MIT, professor of physics, emeritus, said breakthroughprize.org.

The Breakthrough Prize is a set of international awards bestowed in three categories by Breakthrough Prize Board in recognition of scientific advance. This is founded by Google co-founder Sergey Brin, cofounder and chief executive officer of personal genomics company 23andMe Anne Wojcicki, Facebook cofounder Mark Zuckerberg and his spouse Priscilla Chan, venture capitalist and physicist Yuri Milner and his spouse Julia Milner, and founder of Alibaba Group Jack Ma and his spouse Cathy Zhang.

LIGO was built between 1994 and 2002 by Caltech and MIT in partnership with the National Science Foundation of the US, with the aim of observing the gravitational waves predicted by Einstein's general theory of relativity.

After a major upgrade from 2010-2015, LIGO and its team of

scientists detected the wave emanated from two black holes with masses about 30 times that of the sun, spiralling into each other 1.3 billion light years away.

The discovery inaugurates a new era of gravitational wave astronomy which will open a window onto some of the most dramatic and violent phenomenon in nature as well as the mysteries of the early universe.

Stephen Hawking, who won the Special Breakthrough Prize in 2013, said, "This discovery has huge significance: firstly, as evidence for general relativity and its predictions of black hole interactions, and secondly as the beginning of a new astronomy that will reveal the universe through a different medium. The LIGO team richly deserves the Special Breakthrough Prize."

The laureates will be recognized at a ceremony in fall this year, where the annual Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics (distinct from the special prize) will also be presented, along with the Breakthrough Prizes in Life Sciences and Mathematics.