

Thailand nets 1.3m kgs of invasive fish

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand has netted more than 1.3 million kilograms of highly destructive blackchin tilapia fish, the government said Tuesday, as it battles to stamp out the invasive species.

Shoals of blackchin tilapia, which can produce up to 500 young at a time, have been found in 19 Thai provinces, damaging ecosystems in rivers, swamps and canals by preying on small fish, shrimp and snail larvae.

As well as the ecological impact, the government is worried about the effect on the kingdom's crucial fish-farming industry.

Fishing authorities caught 1,332,000 kilograms of blackchin tilapia between February and August 28, authorities said.

The fish, native to West Africa, were first discovered in Thailand's rivers in 2010 before spreading rapidly in 2018, and are now also found in the US state of Florida and in the Philippines.

In July, the Thai government declared the eradication of the species a national priority.

It remains unclear how the fish arrived in Thailand, but local media reports have said they could have been imported by a company from Ghana in 2010.

A parliamentary investigation is under way to determine the cause of the infestation, Nattachai said.

The Thai government has encouraged locals to catch the fish, offering to pay people 15 baht (\$0.42) per kilogram.

Authorities have released predator species to hunt down the tilapia and are also developing genetically modified blackchin tilapia to produce sterile offspring.

A UN science panel warned last year that the tilapia are spreading faster than ever, wrecking crops, distributing disease and upending ecosystems.

More than 37,000 alien species have taken hold far from their places of origin, costing upwards of \$400 billion a year in damages and lost income, the UN panel said.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh attend an official welcoming ceremony in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia yesterday. Putin received a red carpet welcome on a state visit to Mongolia, whose failure to arrest him under a warrant from the International Criminal Court was criticised by Ukraine as a blow against justice.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian strikes kill 41 in Ukraine

At least 180 wounded in the deadliest single attack on Ukraine this year

REUTERS, Kyiv

At least 41 people were killed and more than 180 wounded yesterday when Russia struck a military institute in the central town of Poltava with two missiles, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, the war's deadliest single attack so far this year.

Zelenskyy said in a video that Russian forces struck with two ballistic missiles, damaging a building of the Military Institute of Communications. He ordered a full and prompt investigation.

"The Russian scum will definitely be held accountable for this strike," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram messaging app.

According to the foreign ministry, the type of weapons used left little time for people to find cover once the air alert had sounded.

Photographs posted on social media in Ukraine showed several bodies lying on the ground covered in dust and debris, with the badly damaged side of a large

building behind them. Reuters could not immediately verify the images.

"One of the institute's buildings was partially destroyed, and many people were trapped under the rubble," the defence ministry said on Telegram.



"Thanks to the coordinated work of rescuers and medics, 25 people were rescued, 11 of whom were taken from the rubble. The rescuers are currently continuing their work."

Russia had yet to comment on the attack.

Russia has intensified its missile and drone attacks on Ukraine two-and-a-half

years into the full-scale war.

Last week Ukraine was pummeled with the heaviest bombardment to date, and on Monday ballistic and cruise missiles targeted Kyiv causing loud explosions.

Ukraine also targeted Russia with more than 158 drones at the weekend, damaging an oil refinery near Moscow and a power station.

Zelenskyy repeated his calls for more Western air defences and urged allies to allow their long-range weapons to be used for strikes deeper into Russian territory in order to protect Ukraine.

"We keep telling everyone in the world who has the power to stop this terror: air defence systems and missiles are needed in Ukraine, not in a warehouse somewhere".

Fighting has intensified over the past month, with Russian forces advancing in heavy battles in eastern Ukraine, while Kyiv's troops have mounted their first large-scale cross-border assault into a Russian region, for which Moscow has vowed to retaliate.

Khaleda Zia cleared in 5 defamation cases Committee

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Haque dismissed three defamation cases filed over undermining the national flag and observing a "fake birthday" on August 15.

One of the cases was filed by AB Siddique, president of Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, a pro-Awami League organisation, with a Dhaka court on November 3, 2016, accusing Khaleda and her late husband, former president Ziaur Rahman, of "undermining" the country's map and national flag.

The court dropped Ziaur Rahman's name from the charges as he is dead.

The second case accusing Khaleda of celebrating her "fake birthday" on August 15, the National Mourning Day, was filed by Gazi Zahirul Islam,

former joint general secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists, with another Dhaka court on August 30, 2016.

The third case was filed by AB Siddique on October 21, 2014, claiming that on October 14 of the same year, Khaleda at a programme at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in Dhaka said "the ruling party's [AL] professed secularism was nothing but a sham," adding that her remarks hurt religious sentiments of Muslims.

Third Additional Chief Additional Metropolitan Magistrate Md Tofazzal Hossain dismissed another case as the complainant was absent yesterday without taking any steps.

The fourth case was filed on January 5, 2016 against Khaleda and the party's senior leader Goyeshwar

Chandra Roy for demeaning Liberation War martyrs.

AB Siddique, president of Jananetri Parishad, filed the case against them.

Md Mahbulul Haque (in charge) of the Fourth Additional Chief Additional Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka dismissed another case filed by AB Siddique.

On January 25, 2017, AB Siddique filed the case against Khaleda over a "defamatory statement" on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In the complaint, Siddique alleged that Khaleda, at a programme on December 31, 2016, said Bangabandhu wanted to be the prime minister of undivided Pakistan rather than leading Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) to independence.

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"We have distributed our member's responsibility and made a decision on how they will prepare this report," Bhattacharya said.

However, he did not disclose the responsibilities of each member yet.

The committee will review macroeconomic issues along with issues in the education, health, energy and banking sectors among others.

Issues such as revenue mobilisation, money laundering, mega projects and poverty reduction will be discussed too.

"We shall review all the available

information from a critical perspective. We will verify its accuracy and compare it with the international standard," Bhattacharya said.

The available research in the fields will also be considered while preparing their report.

The committee plans to meet with various stakeholders and experts in sociology, economy and political science at home and abroad to get their opinions.

Within the next three days, the initial outlines of the committee's targets would be unveiled, he added.

Filing of case

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miscreants and take immediate legal action against them "irrespective of party affiliation."

An interim government took over after the fall of the authoritarian government in a student-led mass uprising on August 5.

The brutal force used by the fallen government to quell the popular uprising resulted in many deaths and casualties. Many people have been subjected to abductions, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings during the long-term misrule, reads the circular.

As a result, there is public anger towards the outgoing government. The interim government is determined to prosecute these abuses, the circular states.

Through the circular, the home ministry said the government wants to clarify that legal action will be taken against these activities that disrupt public safety.

If there is a complaint against someone, it should be reported to the superior officers concerned and their respective offices.

In no way can any institution be surrounded or any kind of violent behaviour be undertaken, the circular warns.

Measures will be taken to ensure adequate compliance and eliminate harassment during the process of conducting searches and accepting cases, the ministry circular reads.

Everyone is sincerely urged to cooperate with the government in maintaining law and order, it added.

9 Maoists killed

AFP, Raipur

Indian police killed at least nine Maoist rebels during a gunfight yesterday, officials said, with security forces still searching the forest for more remains and weapons.

The battle took place in Bailadila mountain range in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, Deputy Inspector General of Police Kamal Lochan Kashyap told AFP. "Authorities have recovered automatic, semi-automatic and other weapons," he added.

The clash is the latest in India's long-running Maoist insurgency that began in the 1960s and has cost tens of thousands of lives.

JAIL BREAK ATTEMPT 129 dead in DRC

AFP, Kinshasa

At least 129 people were killed during a weekend prison break attempt at the largest jail in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the interior minister said yesterday.

"The provisional human toll is 129 dead, including 24 who were shot after warnings," minister Jacquemain Shabani said in a video message, adding that at least 59 others had been wounded at the Makala prison in the capital, Kinshasa.

His ministry said several people had been crushed or suffocated and a number of women had been raped.

Witnesses told AFP gunfire had started at the prison at around 2:00 am on Monday morning and lasted for several hours.

11 killed in China school bus mishap

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Eleven people were killed in China's eastern Shandong province yesterday after a school bus lost control at a busy pedestrian junction, broadcaster CCTV reported, with disturbing footage showing bodies lying on the road and trapped under the vehicle.

Six parents and five children were killed in the incident while one remained in critical condition. More than two dozen were injured, CCTV said.

Dongping Police Department said in a statement on WeChat that a vehicle picking up students lost control at a junction in Dongping County, Shandong yesterday morning.

The accident is under investigation, it added.

57 Bangladeshis

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their departure from Bangladesh," Yunus wrote.

On July 19, groups of mostly Bangladeshi nationals who live in the UAE carried out peaceful protests in multiple locations across the UAE to express solidarity with the student protesters in Bangladesh.

The following day, the UAE's attorney general announced an investigation into the protests and just a day later the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal handed the 57 long prison terms for "inciting riots in several streets across the UAE".

Three of those accused were sentenced to life, 53 were given 10-year sentences, while one accused was sentenced to 11 years, according to the UAE's state-run Wam news agency.

The court also ordered the convicts to be deported upon completion of their time in prison.

Human Rights Watch in a statement on July 25 condemned the harsh punishments and said the speed with which the accused were probed, tried and convicted raised serious concerns about the fairness of the judicial process and amounted to unfair trial.

Bangladeshi girl

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the group, he added.

When they approached the barbed wire fence around 9:00pm, BSF personnel opened fire, killing Swarna on the spot and injuring her mother and the couple, he added.

Locals said the couple from Chattogram was taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital with gunshot wounds.

Forcing teachers

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Prof Wahiduddin also urged students to maintain an environment conducive to learning in their educational institutions for their benefit.

According to a count by The Daily Star, at least 150 teachers across the country were forced to resign till August 31 after the fall of Hasina-led government on August 5. Many were also humiliated and harassed.

Besides, several hundred teachers stepped down following demands from students. Over 20 teachers were barred from entering their institutions. Some filed complaints with police stations.

The actual number could be much higher as this newspaper could not reach all places. Protests are continuing at various institutions. The Secondary and Higher Education Division recently issued an order, asking deputy commissioners to see that an environment conducive to education is maintained at educational institutions.

541 killed in countrywide violence

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killed in Jatrabari during the protests, Pradip Kumar Bhowmik was killed in Sirajganj. Cases were filed against 38 journalists, the organisation found.

At least 65 attacks were carried out on the members of the minority communities, which left 61 people injured. A total of 228 Hindu homes, 240 Hindu businesses, and 15 temples were attacked. These attacks

happened in Natore, Dhamrai, Dinajpur, Patuakhali, Shariatpur, Faridpur, Jashore, Noakhali, Meherpur, Chandpur and Khulna.

In addition, the Ahmadiyyas were attacked in Panchagarh and Rangpur, read the report.

The actual figures on violence could be far higher because these only represent the incidents which were reported by the media, it added.

Israeli PM signals no appetite for

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alongside Qatar and Egypt to try to secure a truce deal, replied "no" when asked by reporters in Washington if he thought Netanyahu was doing enough to secure a hostage deal.

The veteran Israeli leader, whose ruling coalition relies on the support of far-right ministers opposed to a truce, insisted that "we say yes" while it is Hamas that has refused to make concessions.

"I will not give in to pressure,"

Netanyahu told the press conference, saying Israel must control Gaza's border with Egypt, the Philadelphi Corridor, to stop Hamas from re-arming.

Israeli left-leaning daily Haaretz said Netanyahu was "masking his motives with security concerns" but said he was primarily concerned with his own political survival.

"His coalition... might unravel if a Gaza deal goes through," it said.

Netanyahu "wants to occupy Gaza on some level indefinitely" and was

now "just saying it more openly", Zonszein told AFP.

Despite "huge opposition" among Israelis who support a Gaza deal, "there's also nobody in the political realm that's able to challenge him," said the analyst.

Israel occupied the Gaza Strip in 1967 and maintained troops and settlers there until 2005, when it withdrew but imposed a crippling blockade and, since the start of the current war, a siege.

Uphold religious harmony

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communal harmony will not be allowed to be played again in the country. Let us either bury them [efforts to play minority card] or burn them in pyres."

Tarique said the followers of one religion have protected for ages the places of worship of another religion from the conspirators who try to destroy religious harmony in Bangladesh. "They have proved

time and again that there is nothing called minority or majority in this country."

He said all the citizens of Bangladesh have one identity -- they are Bangladeshis.

Talking about the current situation in Bangladesh, Tarique said the victory is still far away and the road to success is very long.

"We had been in the opposition camp for the last 17 years and we are

still in the opposition camp. Now it is not the time for complacency."

The BNP leader expressed optimism that their party will be able to present a new Bangladesh to the people if its grassroots leaders and activists could earn their trust.

BNP standing committee members Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Salahuddin Ahmed, and Begum Selima Rahman also spoke at the meeting.