

# Boundless prospect of hilsa

SHYKH SERAJ

Hilsa, a fish that has emotional bondage with the Bengali community living across the world, is engaged with our life, literature and culture. The taste and smell of hilsa fascinate us in many ways. I was born on the bank of Meghna river in Chandpur. It is said that the home of hilsa is Chandpur. Since my childhood, I have such a deep connection with hilsa. I have gone to the deep Meghna river many times on fishermen's boat to see how they catch the fish. I heard the history of the old Hilsa Ghat in Chandpur, which is 400 to 500 years old. There were direct launches from Kolkata. I have seen hilsa in the ghat since I was a boy. The season of hilsa means a festival to me, to the Bengalis.

Silver crop hilsa carries the identity of Bangladesh. I read in the newspaper a few days back, which quoted a research that mentioned hilsa is the only fish in the world, whose religious, social and socio-cultural value is over two and a half thousand crore taka (About USD 259 million). Hilsa can become an even powerful sector of our economy.

Various initiatives are being taken to increase the production of hilsa and to protect it. Among them, all kinds of fishing are prohibited during the spawning season of hilsa in the river for 22 days, starting from



Shykh Seraj at old Hilsa Ghat in Chandpur.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

October 14. There are also two off-seasons for catching fish. Sometimes there is strict monitoring, sometimes there is no sign of it. I have talked to the fishermen many times. They complained that many of the real fishermen did not get government benefits. Again, in the off-season of hilsa, many amateurs are enjoying the government benefits illegally. The project titled 'Development and Management of Hilsa Resources' worth Tk 248.27 crore (USD 29.30 million) was approved at the ECNEC meeting on September 22 to increase the production of hilsa. I have learned from various news sources that the project will increase the production of mother hilsa and jatka (hilsa fry) conservation through implementation of fisheries conservation act and sanctuary management, ensuring alternative employment for 30,000 fisher families, creating awareness on distribution of 10,000 legal nets and conservation of mother hilsa and jatka. Undoubtedly, it's a timely initiative.

A mother hilsa has 10 lakh (one million) eggs. Killing a mother hilsa means destroying 10 lakh hilsa fishes. Hilsa, smaller than 10 inches is considered as jatka and catching them is banned. As a conscious and responsible citizen of the republic, one should refrain himself from buying jatka no matter what the price is. In 2019, I visited Hilsa Research Centre in Chandpur. At that time I spoke in detail to the then Principal Scientific Officer Md Anisur Rahman. He said that the production of hilsa has increased due to improved hilsa management strategies. He said that till the year 2000, the production of hilsa was at best 1,50,000 tonnes a year. In 2010, the production of hilsa went up to 3,12,000 tonnes. Last year,

the production went further up to 5,33,000 tonnes. This is the result of maintaining the right production method and conservation strategy.

According to the Department of Fisheries, the production of hilsa is increasing at a rate of around 10 percent every year in Bangladesh. Hilsa production has increased by 66 percent in the last nine years. Hilsa of Bangladesh has already taken a permanent place in the international arena. This recognition as a geographical indicator or GI product is one of the far-reaching cultural achievements of Bangladesh. Hilsa is now Bangladesh's product.

Hilsa is a sea fish. At some point in its life cycle, it leaves the salty water and finds the new abode in the freshwater. It's a diversified fish. From May 20 to July 23, all kinds of fishing is not allowed in the sea. This time is also very important. However, at that very period, big Indian trawlers enter our waters and catch hilsa from the sea. As a result, the aim in which we are refraining from catching hilsa, gets undermined, says the fishers.

In 2019, I went to Ocean University in Qingdao, China, to learn about their research on the fisheries. I discussed with Professor Chun Leo, a fisheries researcher, about the conservation, research and other issues related to fishing at seas. He said that if a safe environment and pathway from the sea to the rivers for hilsa could be created, its production will increase even more. Professor Chun Leo also suggested that the maritime boundaries of Bangladesh, India and Myanmar are very significant in creating this safety net for hilsa to grow more; hence a united effort from these countries would ensure a far better outcome, in regards to the environmental and economic aspect of hilsa.

# Mongla female crab farmers struggling to survive

Suspension of crab export to China has left them in utter despair

NILIMA JAHAN

The time of the year that Priyanka Biswas usually waits with the bated breath - crab harvesting season - turned her down this year instead, pushing her towards the brink of nervous breakdown.

After incurring huge losses during the previous season this year, the 21-one-year-old crab farmer from Sonaitola union of Mongla in the coastal district of Bagerhat and her husband are expecting to make good money from export during the time but they are yet to get any green signal from the buyers.

The couple are in utter despair as their crabs remain unsold and left to die.

"These crabs will die if those remain unsold for another one or two months. We have incurred a huge loss after the suspension of crab export in February due to the deadly outbreak of novel coronavirus. Our earnings fell drastically and it will be a double blow if we cannot sell those this time," said frustrated Priyanka.

After starting crab cultivation in a small pond seven years back, Priyanka learnt the scientific method of farming crab from Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) in 2014. She and her husband then took a lease of 28 bighas of pond, with a yearly instalment of Tk 3.50 lakh for farming female crabs.

And the profit was quite good - around Tk 7 lakh per year. The crabs are being imported to livemarkets of China, other South Asian countries and frozen markets of Europe. But things took a turn for the worse after the detection of Covid-19 in the country as Priyanka could sell only 25 percent of the crabs to Chinese buyers in Dhaka.

"Within two months (March-April), all the remaining crabs died in unsold condition. It was a loss of more than Tk 1.5 lakh. We released baby crabs worth around Tk 1.80 lakh in our ponds in January," she said.

She could not sell those locally as there was little demand in the market. One kg of crab was sold at Tk 200 while it was sold at Tk 2,200 to the buyers before the coronavirus outbreak.

Priyanka added that two months ago they were told by crab buyers in the local market that the export would resume after Eid-ul-Azha, and they again released baby crabs in their pond spending Tk 50,000. Those crabs were ready for harvesting in 40 days of release. But she did not get any response from the buyers.

"I don't know how we would pay the money to the land owner this year and when will everything go back to normal,"

she said.

Like Priyanka, suspension of crab export to virus-stricken China has left 358 female crab sellers in Mongla struggling to survive, said Md Shafiqur Rahman, project lead, women and youth entrepreneurship and employability at VSO Bangladesh.

He added that although they tried to earn by farming fish, those could not help much. Because, they get quick returns from crabs as those could be harvested in 40 days. But other fish require six months to sell.

Shafiqur said an overwhelming majority of these women once worked as day labourers at others' farms, before the project started.

"But, with their sound knowledge and our assistance, every one of them brought a change in their lives in the past years, in terms of financial solvency and decision making, asset development, and a better lifestyle," he said.

"But currently, all are struggling as their savings dried up amid a fall-off in the demand of crab," he said.

Although Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 12 announced a stimulus package of Tk 3,000 crore to give financial assistance to small and medium farmers to help them face the fallout of Covid-19, most of the female crab farmers are unaware of such support.

Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury, deputy director (finance and planning), department of fisheries, agreed that most of the farmers are not aware of how they can avail the money.

"The money from the stimulus package is being disbursed via the state-owned banks. At first, the concerned farmers, who need the money, should inform the upazila fisheries officer about his fallout due to the pandemic. Then the officer will visit his/her farm and receive his/her application," he said.

"We have a committee to select the beneficiaries in every upazila. If the committee has no objection, the loan is disbursed in accordance with the procedure of the banks," he added.

Sources at the finance ministry said that the progress of disbursement of the fund is slow. Last month, Bangladesh Bank last month extended the timeframe of disbursement.

As of August 31, the total disbursed amount was Tk 286 crore.

Noted agriculture activist Rezaul Karim Siddiqui said as the government announced it to help the farmers, there must be adequate campaigns so that these badly affected farmers can avail the support.



Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Directorate General of Drug Administration**  
 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

**Invitation for Tender (National)**

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare/Health Service Division.
2	Agency	Directorate General of Drug Administration, Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
3	Procuring entity name	Director (CC), Revenue Budget.
4	Procuring entity code (Economic Code)	1270301-(3256102).
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	Procurement of Chemicals.
7	Invitation Ref. No.	Memo No. DGDA/Tender/13/2018/711
8	Date	22/09/2020

**KEY INFORMATION**

9	Procurement method	National Open Tendering Method (NCT).
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**FUNDING INFORMATION**

10	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB).
11	Development partners (if applicable)	N/A.

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

12	Project/programme code (if applicable)	N/A.
13	Project/programme name (if applicable)	N/A.
14	Tender package No.	Chemicals-01
15	Tender package name	Procurement of Chemicals.
16	Tender publication date	02/10/2020.
17	Tender last selling date	15/10/2020.
18	Tender closing date and time	18/10/2020, 11:00am.
19	Tender opening date and time	18/10/2020, 11:30am.
20	Name & address of the office(s)	Directorate General of Drug Administration, Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.
	Selling tender document (principal)	Directorate General of Drug Administration, Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.
	Selling tender document (others)	N/A.
	Receiving tender document	Directorate General of Drug Administration, Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.
	Opening tender document	Directorate General of Drug Administration, Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.

**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

21	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	(a) Only enlisted vendors in Drug Testing Laboratory (DTL) of Bangladesh are eligible to participate in the tender. (b) Technical capability to perform the contract (evidence to be submitted). (c) Additional details are available in the tender schedule.
22	Brief description of goods	Procurement of Chemicals (details mentioned in Section 6 of Tender Schedule).
23	Brief description of related services	Certificate of Analysis (COA) of each batch & Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be submitted with supplied Chemicals.
24	Price of tender schedule (BDT)	1500/- (one thousand five hundred Taka) only per set schedule (non-refundable).

Package No.	Identification of package	Location	Tender security amount (BDT)	Completion time (in weeks)
Chemicals-01	DGDA/Tender/13/2018/711 Date: 22/09/2020	Directorate General of Drug Administration, Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212	2,70,000/- (two lac seventy thousand Taka only)	To be completed within 03 weeks after issuance of work order

**PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS**

25	Name of the official inviting tender	Md. Ayub Hossain.
26	Designation of the official inviting tender	Director (CC).
27	Address of the official inviting tender	Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), Aushadh Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
28	Contact details of the official inviting tender	Phone: 02222280831, E-mail: dgda.gov@gmail.com
29	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

**Md. Ayub Hossain**  
 Director (CC)  
 Directorate General of Drug Administration  
 Mohakhali, Dhaka

GD-1559

**বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক**  
**ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়**  
 প্রধান কার্যালয়  
 মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০  
 বাংলাদেশ।

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-১০৬/২০২০

তারিখ: ১৫ আশ্বিন ১৪২৭  
 ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২০

রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর 'অফিসার' এর ৭৩৬টি পদে (২০১৬ সাল ভিত্তিক) নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রাথমিকভাবে নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের তালিকা।

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ের তত্ত্বাবধানে রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর 'অফিসার' পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রাথমিকভাবে নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের তালিকা নিম্নে উল্লেখ করা হলো:

400408	400796	401373	401460	401907	402794	403087	403738	405018	405107	405125	405263	405576
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410361	410510	410675	410746	411584	411635	412388	412492	413744	414063	414069	414680	416669
416957	417106	417122	417151	417792	417797	418122	418363	418400	418437	418562	419069	420049
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425193	425224	425243	425428	425541	426260	426402	426477	426940	427232	427233	427243	427247
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439512	440062	441623	441915	442034	442420	444241	444248	444494	444985	445565	445575	445947
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450150	450551	450566	451065	451437	451463	451987	452086	453166	453536	453905	453931	453940
454408	454551	454645	454956	455006	455039	455164	455179	455547	455624	455658	455675	457345
457451	457502	457909	458076	458122	458612	458891	458945	459607	460088	460518	460617	460675
461444	461893	462024	462056	462130	463063	463769	463795	463907	464507	465457	465588	466380
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469572	469619	469830	470081	470099	470198	470386	470455	470687	470787	471074	471078	471079
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495140	495281	495322	495343	495403	495536	495633	495739	496366	496449	496544	496906	498089
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