

ACUTE CRISIS OF MOTHER SHRIMPS IN BAY 35 out of 53 hatcheries closed in Cox's Bazar

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At least 35 out of 53 shrimp hatcheries are closed in Cox's Bazar due to acute crisis of mother shrimps following their indiscriminate netting in the Bay of Bengal.

Cultivation of shrimp, one of the major export earners, will suffer a serious setback for want of fries due to crisis of mother shrimps,

around Tk one million to produce shrimp fries but his hatcheries are now facing closure due to non-availability of mother shrimps.

Shrimp export is the second largest foreign earner after garments.

Shrimp fry production starts in January but many hatchery owners are sitting idle, the association leaders said.

They said fishing in the Bay should be banned during breeding

Usually, mother shrimps release eggs during January-March. Fishing in Bay is officially prohibited during the period but the order is not enforced, the association leaders said.

Mother shrimps are mainly netted in coastal areas of Cox's Bazar, Kutubdia, St. Martins, Noakhali and Khulna. Fishermen from Myanmar, India and Thailand also net fishes in Bangladesh

mother shrimps are caught annually from four fishing regions in the Bay, said Swapon Chandra Pal, an official of Cox's Bazar Sea Survey, Management and Development Project.

Alive mother shrimps are sold to hatcheries at higher prices and the dead ones are frozen and smuggled out, he said.

Cox's Bazar Shrimp Fry Traders' Cooperative Association President Noor Mohammad said a mature mother shrimp releases at least one crore eggs after every eight months.

But young mother shrimps of 4 to 5 months are caught and sold to hatcheries, which do not release over 50,000 eggs, Swapon said.

District Fishery Officer M Kabir Ahmed also admitted that the ban on netting shrimp and other fishes in the coastal waters during breeding period is not enforced.

Even two years ago, a trawler could net 250 mother shrimps in a trip, which has come down to 20-25 now, he said.

Because of netting 'weak' mother shrimps, fries produced by them in hatcheries also die as they are very much prone to virus attack, he added.

Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mohammed Aminul Islam, held a meeting recently with hatchery owners and officials to find ways to overcome the crisis.

Fish resources will deplete in the Bay in two-three years if indiscriminate netting by local and foreign trawlers is not stopped, Yunus said.

Even two years ago, a mother shrimp was available at between Tk 600 and 700, but now its price is not less than Tk 7,000.

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period. Otherwise, the export earning sector will be ruined, they added.

They said 53 hatcheries were set up along the coast by spending crores of taka in last several years as shrimp cultivation and export became a booming business.

The hatcheries in Cox's Bazar supplied fries to shrimp farms covering about one and a half lakh hectares in Cox's Bazar, Khulna and Sathkhira regions.

But many hatchery owners are now thinking to wind up business.

Rais Uddin, owner of Marigold Shrimp Hatchery, said he invested

territorial waters illegally, they claimed.

"Hatchery owners are now in a miserable condition", said Yunus Chowdhury.

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Over 50,000 people earn their livelihood by working in shrimp hatcheries in Cox's Bazar, said Nazibul Islam, owner of Balaka Hatchery.

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shrimps are caught annually from four fishing regions in the Bay, said Swapon Chandra Pal, an official of Cox's Bazar Sea Survey, Management and Development Project.

A joint police team of Ramna in Dhaka and Gaibandha Sadar arrested him.

Chhana was wanted by police since declaration of emergency.

Plainclothes law enforcers had kept an eye on the mosque and six other spots in Dhaka city for several days. Confirming his presence at the mosque, the joint team cordoned the mosque and arrested him under Section 16/2 of Emergency Powers Act.

Police said they sought permission from a court here yesterday to bring Chhana to Gaibandha.

He may be brought here in a couple of days, Gaibandha Police Superintendent Saleh Md Tanvir told this correspondent.

BSF yesterday gave BSF a letter for returning the body and holding a flag meeting, he said.

BSF killed 11 Bangladeshis on the southwestern border since January 1, sources said.

After state emergency, Chhana, an alleged godfather of extortionists and musclemen, went into hiding, police said. Chhana enjoyed the blessings of Hawa Bhavan, they claimed.

Police said they are also hunting for Sumon Dev, a close aide to Chhana.

After voluntary retirement from police service, Chhana joined BNP and became its Gaibandha district president.

Muslemen under his protection collected illegal toll from government development projects, captured tenders and also realised

money in the name of promotion and tenure of officials and giving jobs, sources claimed.

Chhana became a powerful member of primary school teacher recruitment committee by driving out an honest member Ramjan Ali and realised Tk one lakh from each job seeker, the sources said.

The tenders captured by Chhana included those for construction of Gaibandha stadium and Gaibandha Sadullapur, Gaibandha-Nakaihat, Gobindnagar-Gaibandha-Shaghata and Gaibandha-Balashai roads, Kamarjani river port, Fulchhari embankment protection work and Brahmaputra bank protection embankment from Gideri to Sayedpur.

An Executive Engineer at Gaibandha Water Development Board (WDB) was allegedly beaten by Chhana's men for resisting capture of tender and he was subsequently transferred, sources said.

They said Sumon Dev controlled phenyl trade in Gaibandha district but police could not take action against him due to Chhana.

PHOTO: STAR

Two mother shrimps procured at exorbitant prices by a hatchery owner in Cox's Bazar.

Yunus Chowdhury, vice-chairmen of Cox's Bazar Shrimp Hatchery Owners Association, told this correspondent yesterday.

But the authorities concerned are yet to take any effective step in this regard, he alleged.

Mother shrimps have virtually depleted in the coastal areas in last two years because of indiscriminate netting in absence of any government policy and supervision, he said.

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