

## An eager wait for spawns ends

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Eager wait of hundreds of fishermen ends as the indigenous fish species like Ruih, Katal and Mrigel started releasing spawns at the river Halda yesterday afternoon.

The fishes spawn along two kilometres stretch of the river from Angkurighona to Kagotiariek when some 1200 people in around 600 boats are collecting the eggs.

The release of spawns is expected to continue far into the night as some 40 per cent of expected volume of fertilised eggs have been released until the evening, said the sources.

The Halda that flows through Raozan, Hathazari and Fatikchhari of north Chittagong is known as "the potential natural breeding ground of carp fish" since time immemorial.

During the Bangla months of Baishakh and Jaishtha (April and May) every year, different species of giant fishes like Ruih, Katal, Mrigel and Kaliboush start migrating from the rivers Karnaphuli, Matamuhuri and Sangu to the spawning centre at Halda.

At a suitable juncture of dark fortnight or full moon and in congenial weather, particularly at the first shower of the monsoon, they start releasing fertilised eggs (locally known as Swarna Renu - gold sperm) at a 10km stretch

from Satterghat to Madunaghat of Raozan upazila.

They spawn at a time or in two to three phases. Each phase continues for around 12 hours when the spawning centre takes a festive look with hundreds of local people in small boats collecting the eggs.

The fertilised eggs are preserved in small holes dug at the homesteads to hatch within four days. The four-day fries are sold at Tk 12,000 to 14,000 per kg to farmers coming from different parts of the country. After some 15 days, one kg of four-day fries produce over two lakh finger-sized fries to earn at least Tk 2 lakh, sources said.

Researchers and fisheries officials said spawn collection from the Halda began in 1945. At that time around 65,000kgs of spawns were collected on an average a year.

Prof Mohammad Ali Azadi, who has been studying spawning and breeding of mild water fishes at the Halda for the last two decades, said the highest quantity of 1.23 lakh kgs of fertilised eggs were collected in the Halda in 1946. It produced 4,111kgs of four-day fries. The present market price of 4111kg four-day fries is about Tk 6 crore.

However, non-spawning until now this year has concerned the district fisheries officials and fry collectors reminding them of

almost no spawning in 2004. Besides, collection of fertilised eggs and production of fries marked a sharp decline in the recent years, said the local people.

In the fifties Halda used to provide 70 percent of fries of major carps, sources in the District Fisheries Office (DFO) said. The Padma, Jamuna and Brahmaputra provided the remaining 30 percent, sources added.

But, supply of fries of major carps by the Halda has come down to 33 per cent, said the experts.

They blamed man-made disasters like indiscriminate netting of mother fishes (egg carrying fishes), plying of mechanised boats during the spawning period and loop that disrupt the smooth flow of the river water, for this.

Besides, conventional hatching of spawning reduced the survival rate and production of fries, said the experts.

Hatching of the spawns in clear water of plastic or tiled tanks raises the survival rates to 90 percent and proper preservation and management of natural spawning and breeding centre alone can flood the country with fishes, they said.

The experts said declaring the 10km of the Halda stretching from Satterghat to Madunaghat as a fish sanctuary is a must for

increasing release and collection of spawns.

Besides, the authorities should impose a ban on fishing from late March to early July in the Halda and the other related rivers like the Karnaphuli, the Sangu and the Matamuhuri from where the broad fishes migrate before breeding, they added.

Several primary steps have been taken at both public and private levels for training of poor egg collectors on modern fry-breeding process and awareness campaign to stop killing of mother fishes during the peak season, sources at District Fishery Office said.

But, a project involving around Tk 14 crore taken in 2005 in this regard was caught in limbo due to fund constraint, they said.

The project was initiated for rehabilitation of fishermen to check netting of mother fishes, river dredging, renovation of sluice gates, renovation and construction of hatcheries along the banks of the river and for creating awareness among the egg collectors during the spawning period.

The five years of implementation of the project titled "Restoration of natural fish spawning centre at the Halda" was scheduled to start in July last year, sources said.



Fishermen wait for spawns for hours on the bank of the river Halda.

### KARNAPHULI EPZ

## First phase of work completed ahead of schedule



Entrance of the Karnaphuli EPZ at Patenga.

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The development work of Karnaphuli EPZ under first phase has been completed ahead of schedule that expires on June 30, drawing an astounding response from the investors.

Out of 100 plots under first phase on 74 acres of land, the EPZ allocated 87 plots, including 14 large investors with 350 million US dollar (equivalent to Tk 2450 crore) investment, sources said.

Karnaphuli EPZ is the 8th state owned Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in the country on some 222 acres of land.

Most of the entrepreneurs are now setting up industrial units on their allocated plots to create jobs for over 25,000 people.

Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) is implementing the project in two phases at an estimated cost of Tk 84 crore. The land that once belonged to

now defunct Chittagong Steel Mills Limited at Patenga in the city was handed over to BEPZA for setting up the second state-owned EPZ in Chittagong on April 1 in 2005.

Development of 100 plots involving Tk 34 crore financed by the government have been completed ahead of schedule that expires on June 30, said Project Director AMM Shamsuddin Chowdhury.

"We are trying to make the Karnaphuli EPZ as a model for other EPZs in the country," he added.

Fourteen firms from home and abroad were allocated 87 plots while allotment process for the rest 13 plots under first phase have been finalised.

Of them, seven firms from US, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia got around 60 plots.

The seven foreign include M/s Kenpark Bangladesh Apparels of USA, M/s Cosmo (Bangladesh)

Limited and M/s Precision Optics (BD) Ltd of Japan, M/s Paolo Footwear (BD) Ltd and M/s Eusebio Sporting (Bangladesh) Ltd of Taiwan and M/s Hong Kong Denim (Pvt) Ltd and Malaysian M/s Whitex Garments (BD) Pvt Ltd of Hong Kong.

They have commitment for investment of around 350 million US dollar, which can be raised later on, sources at Karnaphuli EPZ said.

Besides, M/s Denim Expert Ltd, a joint venture company of Holland and Bangladesh, continues construction work on four plots.

Twenty-three plots were allocated to six local companies, including M/s Liss Jeans Manufacturing Limited, M/s Shah Amanat Accessories, M/s Arrow Fabrics Ltd, M/s Bantasa Apparels (Pvt) Limited, M/s Rhythm Dressmaker Ltd and M/s Mostafa Knitting & Dyeing Industries Ltd.

The US based M/s Kenpark Bangladesh Apparels (Private) Ltd

will build apparel factories on 17A-type plots. It will produce jackets, trousers, shirts, shorts, skirts, sportswear and other knitted garments, creating jobs for around 3500 local workers with an investment of around 16 crore US dollar, said Jashim Uddin Khan, technical engineer of Kenpark.

Around 70 per cent construction work of the factory buildings has already been completed, he said, adding that they might go for operation by September.

M/s Arrow Fabrics Limited has already started its production initially in a building of the EPZ on April 12 with 100 workers, General Manager Sakhawat Hossain Chowdhury Arju said. He said they are expected to start their full operation within four months after completion of construction of factory buildings on two plots.

Malaysian Whitex Garments will invest over 1.25 crore US dollar

at the EPZ. A contract has been signed between BEPZA and Whitex Garments on May 10 in this regard.

Meanwhile, implementation of the second phase is going on in full swing to develop 110 plots on 148 acres of land involving Tk 50 crore with 80 per cent to come from the World Bank as financial assistance.

An international tender will be floated to remove the structures on the Chittagong Steel Mill on 148 acres of land this month, sources said.

The development work of the plots will begin after removal of the structures, Karnaphuli EPZ Project Director AMM Shamsuddin said.

Many foreign companies are in a queue for plots in the EPZ, he added.

"Besides, we will extend the EPZ to the abandoned CSD Godown of Food Department at Halishahar on 59.28 acres of land," he said.

### the week that was

#### Reception to 10 mothers

Centre for Disabled Concern (CDC) accorded a reception to ten mothers of the children with disability in the port city on Sunday to mark the World Disabled Day.

CDC organised the reception ceremony and a discussion meeting at Training Institute at MMAI Road in the port city.

The speakers at the function said the mother is pioneer who fights for her children with disability and looks after them amid social barriers.

A mother of a child with disability does the most challenging task in the world while makes her child dream of and enjoy the life, they said.

They called upon all to honour the mothers throughout the year not only on some specific or special days.

Jannatul Ferdous, mother of a child with disability of the CDC presided over the meeting while CDC guest trainer Manjurul Islam was the key speaker. Mothers of the children with disability Hosne Ara Begum, Jahanara Akhter, Mahmuda Chowdhury, CDC Executive Director Selim Nazrul, Director Mohammad Kamal Uddin, Mohammad Helal Uddin, Tareq Mohammad Iqbal, Semual Pinaru, Joyasri Tripathi, Mohammad Sana Ullah and Rinku Das also spoke.

#### Thai Airways announces special package

Thai Airways Public Company Limited announced special fare and packages

for its passengers to Bangkok and some domestic destinations in Thailand.

They also reduced fare to 30 US dollars from 90 to different destinations worldwide till June this year.

Polapat Neelhamorn, general manager of Thai Airways International, Chittagong said their valued clients can travel to Bangkok paying 230 US dollar instead of previous 290.

The customers will also have the opportunity to visit attractive places like Krabi, Phuket and Chiang Mai with minimum price of 378, 433 and 475 US dollar for three days and two nights.

The airline is operating three flights on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday every week to Bangkok while it connects 72 destinations in the world since December 11 in 2002.

#### Poly Industries signs agreement with CityCell

Modern Poly Industries Limited signed a corporate agreement with CityCell, a cellphone operator in the country, recently.

Following the agreement, Poly Industries will avail some exclusive services like CDMA Data Services and other Value Added Service provided by the cellphone operator.

They will also enjoy exclusive corporate rates and priority services by CityCell's nationwide coverage.

Poly Industries Managing Director Abu Sufian Chowdhury and CityCell Regional Office General Manager Sobhan M Shahabuddin Raj signed the agreement on behalf of their respective

organisations.

Regional Sales Manager Mohammad Fahim, Corporate and Direct Sale Senior Executive Syed Asad Mahmood, Corporate Sale Executive Mohammad Hasan and Poly Industries Manager Mohammad Abdus Sattar were also present at the signing ceremony.

#### Deposit collection begins

Social Investment Bank, Halishahar

Branch on Wednesday began a month-

long deposit collection programme.

Former director of the bank and businessman Mohammad Nurul Amin inaugurated the programme at a ceremony.

The Bank Zonal Head Nanda Dulal Bhattacharyya presided over the ceremony while governing body Senior Vice-Chairman Humayun Kabir Khan, Director Mohammed Shah Alam, Agrabad Branch Manager Mohammad Jahangir Khaled, Jubilee Road Branch Manager Mohammad Zuber Saadik and Khatunganj Branch Manager Tabriz Shahjahan were also present.

#### Workshop on RMG factory management

A five-day training workshop on "Improvement of Production Management Skill for the Garments Industry" began in the port city on Saturday.

AOTS and Pegasus jointly organised the workshop at Karnaphuli Hall of Agrabad Hotel in the port city.

Speakers at the inaugural ceremony said there is no alternative to

achieving technological skills for an industrial revolution.

They said as a development partner Japan makes a great contribution for Bangladesh through technology transfer.

They urged the garment factory owners, factory management department and Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association to equip and enrich themselves with modern technology.

Honorary Consul General of Japan Mohammad Nurul Islam, Pegasus Japan Managing Director Hiroshi Oda, AOTS Adviser Dr AKM Moezzem Hossain and



Prof Muntasir Mamun speaks at the inaugural ceremony of a two-day Shishu Utsab (children's festival) at Nazrul Square in the port city on Friday. Pathshala, a children's cultural organisation, organised the festival.

Pegasus Singapore In-charge T Mori also spoke at the ceremony.

Pegasus Bangladesh Liaison Office DGM Mohammad Imrul Islam Khan, Manager Mohammad Khorshed Alam, Mohammad Hasib Anwar, Shamim Hossain and Saifulah were present.

A total of 50 production directors and officers from different garment factories took part in the workshop.

#### Children's festival ends

A two day children's festival concluded in the port city on Saturday.

Shishu Pathshala (Children's Library), a children's organisation, organised the festival at Nazrul Square (old DC Hill).

Speakers at the inaugural ceremony urged the guardians to create

atmosphere for their children conducive to acquiring the good qualities of human being.

Former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University (CU) Prof Alamgir Muhammad Sirajuddin inaugurated the festival as the chief guest with Dean of CU Social Science Faculty Prof Gazi Saleh Uddin in the chair.

Prof Muntasir Mamun, eminent TV personality Ali Imam and the daily Azadi Editor MA Malek also spoke at the inaugural function.

The speakers emphasised the need for introducing the children with the rich heritages of the country so that they can properly know their glorious past.

Hundreds of students from different primary schools of the city participated in the drawing competition, film-show and painting exhibition arranged on the festival ground.

A free medical camp was also organised on this occasion.



Sri Lankan students and expatriates living in Bangladesh celebrate Buddha Purnima, the largest religious festival of the Buddhist community, lighting candles at the Buddhist Temple in the port city on Friday.

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