



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

# FISHERYGHAT Where Fish Lovers Gather

DWAIPAYAN BARUA



Fish from both the sea and fresh-water bodies are being traded here for at least three decades now.

Hundreds of fishing boats and trawlers of various sizes berth by the Fisheryghat at late night. It's busy time. After weeks in the sea, it's time to unload their catches. And they must be quick to reach the market and find customers before anyone else.

It's a sight to behold when all the fishes are loaded on small trucks and carried to the market -- fish of all types, shapes and sizes. There are ray fish and skates with their disc like shapes, gray sail fish having erectile dorsal fin and also shark.

Then there are Hilsa, Lakka, Koi Koral, Datina Koral, Rupchanda Chhuri, Loitta, Faissa, Shrimp, Ranga

Choitka, Tailla, Surma, Chapila, you name it.

On a lucky day, you can find a giant Koi Koral weighing around 200 kgs.

Most expensive of all these fish is a male Datina. One of these fish weighing about 20 kgs sells between Tk 2 and 2.5 lakh.

One reason is Datina has high demand abroad for its maw. Datina maw or lakka are luxury texture ingredients in Chinese cuisine. Half a kilo fish maw can be sold for up to Tk 1 lakh.

Freshwater fish has also great demand since this market supplies the major portion of the demand in the entire Chittagong division.

Fish farmers from Satkhira, Khulna,

Mymensingh and other districts also send fish here -- Ruhi, Ayre, Katol, Mrigel, Telapia, Bata, shrimp, Baish, Pangas, Koral, Mola and what not.

On a busy day, more than 100 tonnes of fish are traded for Tk 10-12 crore.

One unique thing about this market is that sales are on credit. In most cases buyers don't pay in cash. Traders say that it's trust, not money, that has kept the market so vibrant for decades.

In most days, the trade is over by 10 or 11 in the morning.

By this time, of course, your morning walk is done and you go home, if not with some of these fresh fish, certainly with the memory of the stroll.



If you are an early riser and want to take a stroll around the port city before it gets busy, you can consider the Fisheryghat fish market on the bank of the Karnaphuli. It is one of the largest wholesale fish trading centres in the country.

Take a rickshaw to Patharghata, the old part of the city. The moment you cross Kotwali Thana Mor you will find rickshaw-vans or pick-ups rushing, breaking the silence of the dawn.

Past the eye-catching Portuguese church, smell of fresh fish hits your nose when you reach Iqbal Road.

Fishermen with their catches from the Bay of Bengal as well as from different parts of the country start to assemble here in this early morning and almost all the *arats* are open by then.

