## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

# We must focus on rooting out inequalities



Bangladesh undoubtedly impressive progress in overall human

as well as on specific human development fronts. Yet, the achievements have not been even or uniform across several planes, such as socio-economic groups, regions, gender, rural-urban divide, and so on. Furthermore, in spite of the phenomenal human development progress in Bangladesh, significant human deprivations still remain on various fronts. And with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, such deprivations may widen and deepen. Therefore, over the past half a century, the human development tide in Bangladesh has lifted boats, but not all boats and not each to the same extent.

Inequality subdues the gains in human development. Bangladesh's overall human development score, evaluated by the Human Development Index (HDI)—a composite measure of basic human development—was 0.632 in 2019, but declined to 0.478 when discounted for inequality, implying a loss of 24.4 percent in human development due to inequality. Such disparities exist in various dimensions, as measured by different human development

indicators. For example, while the under-five mortality rate was a little more than 20 per 1,000 live births for the richest quintile, it was nearly 50 per 1,000 live births among the poorest quintile. In 2019, while 85 percent of babies born to the richest 20 percent of the population were delivered by skilled professionals, the corresponding figure for the poorest quintile was only 32 percent. The same year, the literacy rate for populations aged seven years and more was about 75 percent in Barishal, but only 60 percent in Sylhet. In 2019, the mean years of schooling among girls in Bangladesh was slightly above four years, but that of boys was six years. In terms of income and expenditure, the top 10 percent of the population of Bangladesh accounted for 38 percent of total national income in 2016, while the share of the bottom 40 percent of the population in national income was only 13 percent. In the same year, the per capita monthly household expenditure of the bottom decile was Tk 2,122, while that of the top decile was four times more at Tk 9,137.

Like any other country, Bangladesh also experiences gender disparities in human development. In 2019, the female HDI value for Bangladesh was 0.596 in comparison with the male counterpart value of 0.660. Even though gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary level enrolment, dropout rates remain higher for girls than for boys. Within Bangladesh, the literacy rate for women remains lower than that of their male counterparts—76.7



PHOTO: STAR

percent. The mean years of schooling for females is 5.7, which is also lower than that for males at 6.9 years. At the tertiary level of education, the female rate of enrolment in 2017 was 17 percent, as opposed to 24 percent for their male counterparts.

Gender inequality in employment has been a salient feature of Bangladesh's labour market. According to the Labour Force Survey 2016-17, only 36 percent of women participate in the labour market in comparison to the 81 percent for men. The proportion of females engaged in unpaid family labour remains at a high level of 29.1 percent against just 4.2 percent for males. The average monthly wage for males was 10 percent higher than for females (Tk 13,583 against Tk 12,254). The female share of employment in senior and middle

management was just 11.5 percent in 2017. The share of seats in parliament held by women stood at 20.6 percent in 2019—up from less than 10 percent in the 1990s.

With regard to climate change impacts, the climate vulnerable districts are also the districts with a higher incidence of poverty, which we can observe in flood-prone districts like Kurigram and Gaibandha. In terms of nutritional outcomes, almost all the coastal districts and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) show a higher ratio of wasted children than the national average. In the climate-vulnerable districts (e.g. coastal, flood-prone and haor areas), about 45 percent of households suffer from some kind of disease. In climate-induced disaster-prone areas, because of damaged schools, travel disruptions due to road or bridge

collapse, spoilt books, and reduced earnings of parents during disasters, school attendance is negatively affected. This has been observed in districts like Kurigram, Feni and Patuakhali during disasters.

The significant lingering human deprivations on various fronts can also be seen through the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) —a composite measure of the non-income aspects of deprivationwhich indicates that almost one in every four persons in Bangladesh suffers from multidimensional poverty. Multidimensional poverty also varies along the rural-urban divide. For example, in 2019, the MPI value in rural Bangladesh was almost twice than that in urban Bangladesh. Even though there have been significant improvements in health outcomes, there are still major deprivations there. More than one in every four children are stunted in their growth and more than one in every five children are underweight. In Bangladesh, in 2018, there was one doctor for every 2,000 people, one nurse for every 2,500 people, and one hospital bed for every 1,250 people. In terms of social services, 45 percent of people were without safely-managed drinking water services in 2019 and 22 percent were without electricity. More than half of those who have jobs are in vulnerable employment. Just like any other country, the

Covid-19 pandemic may erode the human development gains and create new human deprivation in the country. As of 2019, around 34

million people were still in income poverty. Covid-19, through its economic repercussions, may push another 30 million into poverty. The country may also lose between 1.1 million to 1.6 million jobs for the youth, depending on the containment of the virus. As of June 2020, a total of 70,000 workers lost their jobs in the garment industry of Bangladesh, and around another one million jobs in this sector were at risk of becoming redundant till the end of 2020. Covid-19 has already exposed the fragility of the health system, which may become more vulnerable in the coming days. Information technologybased education may generate more inequalities since children from rural areas or from poor households will not have access to this technology. Covid-19 has also had asymmetrical impacts on women in terms of their formal work in the economy as well as the burden of their household and care work. It may also lead to more friction and domestic violence because of lockdowns. The implications on mental health due to Covid-induced lockdowns have also been widely discussed.

These disparities and deprivations in human development in Bangladesh will create some lingering challenges, some deepening challenges and some emerging challenges for the country. They will require a matrix of policies and institutional reforms—an issue which is of prime importance for Bangladesh.

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#### WORLD OCEANS DAY

# Our local marine megafauna need urgent protection



Alifa Haque

thought-**L** provoking to see how the growing interest in conserving terrestrial megafauna (for example, the Bengal Tiger) is

starkly different from the interest in preserving marine megafauna (sharks, rays, turtles, whales). Animals living in water are generally considered as "fisheries-related" and inherently tied to food consumption and livelihoods, although ecologically, a tiger and a shark are equally important for ensuring the balance of the natural world. Our failure to properly appreciate marine animals as animals with the right to thrive in their own habitats is directly shaping our perceptions of them as generators of food and livelihoods. This leads to conservation actions that often fail to adequately prioritise marine animals.

For this World Oceans Day, I'd like to focus on a group of local marine residents from the Bay of Bengal who many do not know even exist in our coastal waters. These animals are essential catches for our coastal fishers because of their high value in international markets, but they also happen to be one of the most critically endangered groups of marine fishes in the world. As a result, they are stranded right in the middle of two important agendas—conserving marine species and ensuring the well-being of people dependent on them. Instead of treating them as separate, we must try to create a bridge between these agendas by envisioning them as a whole, where one cannot be achieved without the other.

Many of these species have already lost up to 99 percent of their population in a large number of areas. Some were declared locally extinct from many tropical countries, such as the "rhino rays". The name is taken from the "Rhinopristiformes" family they belong to—in short, the rhinos of the sea, who are in no way less fascinating than the rhinos of the land. Typically characterised by the presence of a protruding and somewhat pointed snout, these species are one of the wonders within the larger story of marine animals and their evolution over thousands and thousands of years.

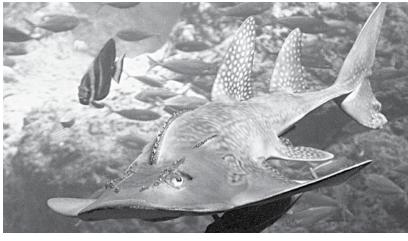
Landing and catch surveys in Bangladesh and neighbouring India and Myanmar indicate that the Bay of Bengal is a hotspot for several threatened and genetically distinct rhino rays. Therefore, it did not surprise us when we, through our marine conservation research at the University of Dhaka and the University of Oxford, found that rhino rays, including those globally threatened and nationally protected, are being caught and landed in unmonitored sites in coastal Bangladesh. They are an essential component of Bangladesh's marine biodiversity that support our artisanal fisheries (which depend on traditional/subsistence fishing). The diversity of rhino rays recorded in our studies is substantially higher than previously reported. They are caught with a variety of fishing gear, both as by-catch and targeted fishery.

At least 13 different rhino rays exist in Bangladeshi waters; it could be more. They belong to three broad groups—sawfish (with a saw-like rostrum which alone can be as big as five feet, whereas the whole animal can be 21 feet or more), guitarfish (the body looks like a guitar) and wedgefish (which have amazingly spotted bodies). Mainly thriving in Bangladesh's shallow and murky coastal waters, this group of animals is an integral part of our coastal and marine ecosystems. The Bay of Bengal provides one of the most suitable habitats for these species and potentially one of the last handful largetooth sawfish.

There are ample reasons for rhino rays to thrive in the Bay of Bengal. Between India and Indonesia, the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) spans across six million square kilometres and includes

internationally. In contrast to other countries involved in the fin trade (such as Indonesia, Malaysia and China, to name a few), almost every part of the rhino ray is sold in Bangladesh. Fresh meat and dried meat, fins, intestines, skin and bones are exported to China and Hong Kong and sold internally to local indigenous communities. Most of these products end up in south-eastern Bangladesh, from where traders export them to Myanmar. Customs checks are not conducted in this unique route, which is why monitoring is limited.

The scenario mentioned above is aggravated by continuous habitat loss and degradation in the nearshore soft-bottom habitats preferred by these species. Similar degradation has been reported in the mangrove shrimp aquaculture, increasing salinity, illegal fish poisoning, and intensive and unregulated fishing. Therefore, high fishing pressures and habitat degradation have emerged as an alarming combination barring the recovery of rhino rays. Unless



A Bowmouth Guitarfish, which is one of the rhino rays that can be found in the Bay of Bengal. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

vulnerable marine habitats forming four percent of the world's coral reefs and seamounts, as well as nearly a tenth of the world's mangroves, seagrass beds and extensive estuaries. Such ecosystem diversity suggests that BOBLME supports a rich habitat. Our studies revealed that the

warm tropical waters and shallow soft-bottom habitats along the coastline of southwest and southcentral Bangladesh are very favourable to rhino rays. These regions also happen to be dominated by artisanal fisheries. The catch and trade of rhino rays in Bangladesh has been a common practice for decades. All of the nearshore shallow waters in Bangladesh are utilised by a fleet of vessels deploying an array of unselected gears. Artisanal fisheries, therefore, exert substantial pressure on rhino ray populations as they try to meet the increasing demands from the meat and fin industries in Asian markets and some other countries. What is even more interesting is that these pressures are exacerbated by the local belief (obviously untrue) that sawfish meat cures cancer.

Rhino rays have been a source of marine protein for coastal communities since the Bronze Age. The most valued rhino ray product is the fin, sold at very high prices

we mitigate fishing pressures and trade, expecting a recovery of these species is impracticable. The steep decline of several rhino ray species in Bangladesh is evident. In our study sites, one fisher mentioned, "Even eight to nine years ago during the fishing season, there used to be regular landings of Fullaissha (local name of one species of wedgefish)—at least two to three every day. But I have not seen or caught one since 2009."

Rhino rays comprise a complex socioeconomic component in global and Bangladeshi fisheries. They are not just commercially significant; they also contribute to the protein intake of indigenous and other coastal communities. In light of the depletion of other marine species due to overexploitation, rhino rays have become highly desirable alternatives. The harsh reality is that the demand for these proteins will only increase in the coming decades due to a continual increase in fisheries, especially in developing countries.

Millions of small-scale fishers in Bangladesh are highly dependent on marine resources for food security and micro-nutrients. By 2050, we expect our planet will need to provide sufficient and nutritious food for approximately 10 billion people, which suggests the need

for continued expansion of global fisheries to maintain or improve human well-being. Yet, fish stocks and marine ecosystems already face depletion under current levels of fishing pressure. Bangladesh is no different, and the political interest is high to generate more revenue from the marine fisheries sector. While economic gains are necessary, they cannot be achieved in exchange for critical biodiversity loss. To promote

sustainable rhino ray fishery practices that will help stabilise population declines, we need a holistic framework and a precautionary approach where conservation actions are taken before species reach a critical limit. Such a model would value evidence from science and promote local pioneers, collaboration and continual trials at the national and regional level, ensuring the well-being of both the fish and the people, which

is precisely the theme for this year's Oceans Day: "Life and Livelihoods".

The fate of rhino rays in the Bay of Bengal depends on the individual and collective efforts of all stakeholders, and ultimately, the political will of all surrounding nations.

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### গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয় ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন



### 'উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(সয়াবিন) এবং উন্নতমানের ছোটদানা দেশী মন্তর ডাল সরবরাহ কাজের জন্য 'দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা'-২০০৮, ২০০৯' এবং তদীয় সংশোধনী অনুসারে নিম্নবর্গিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে

ম্মারক নং-প্রশাঃ-২৭৩/১৮২০

দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্যঃ

১৭। দরপত্র যোগ্যতা

তারিখ-০৬/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ ফোর্সের ১ম কোয়ার্টারের (জুলাই ২০২১ খ্রিঃ হতে সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত) উন্নতমানের ভোজ্যতেল

ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী ঠিকাদারগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। ০১। মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ স্বরষ্ট্রে মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ ০২। সংস্থা ০৩। দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি), ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে লট নং-০১ ও ০২-এ বর্ণিত কাজের জন্য ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে ০৪। কি কারণে দরপত্র আহবান ০৫। সংগ্রাহক সন্তার জেলা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নং-প্রশাঃ ২৭৩/১৮২০ ০৬। দরপত্র আহবানের সূত্র নং ০৮। দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM) অর্থের উৎসঃ ০৯। বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট খাতে অর্থ বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে ১০। দরপত্র প্যাকেজ ন ১১। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ ০৬ জ্বন ২০২১খ্রিঃ ১২। দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ২০ জুন ২০২১খ্রিঃ (বেলা ১৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত) ২১ জুন ২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ১৩। দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময় ১৪। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় ২১ জুন ২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১৩:৩০ ঘটিকা অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস (ক) ডিআইজি, এপিবিএন, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা (খ) কমাভিং অফিসার (এসপি), ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ (গ) পুলিশ সুপার, ময়মনসিংহ দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিস (ক) কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়, ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ (খ) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ময়মনসিংহ কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়, ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ দরপত্র খোলার স্থান ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ ১৬। প্রি-টেন্ডার সভার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময় তারিখ- ১৭/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ, সময়ঃ ১২:০০ ঘটিকা

| আবেদনপত্র প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে দরপত্র তফসিল (সিডিউল) বিক্রয় করা হবে এবং দরপত্র তফসিল ক্রয়ের সময় ফার্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব সীল সঙ্গে আনতে হবে<br>(ঝ) অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা যা আইটেম অনুসারে টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল-এ উল্লেখ আছে |       |   |                 |                |               |                  |
|--|-------|---|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| ১৮। মালামালের বিবরণ ঃ  |       |   |                 |                |               |                  |
|  | লট নং | আইটেম   | পরিমাণ          | দরপত্রের মূল্য | দরপত্র জামানত | কাজ সম্পন্ন করার |
|  |       |   |                 | (টাকা)         |               | সময়সীমা         |
|  |       |   |                 | (অফেরৎযোগ্য)   |               |                  |
|  | ٥٥    | ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে ফোর্সের ১ম কোয়ার্টারের বিএসটিআই           | চাহিদা অনুযায়ী | টাঃ = ৮৫০/-    | টাঃ ৬০,০০০/-  |                  |
|  |       | কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত ভিটামিন 'এ' সমৃদ্ধ কোলেস্টেরলমুক্ত সুপার রিফাইড |                 |                |               | (জুলাই ২০২১খ্রিঃ |
|  |       | ভৌজ্যতেল (সয়াবিন) সরবরাহ কাজ                                   |                 |                |               | হতে সেপ্টেম্বর   |

(ক) হালনাগাদ ব্যবসায়িক বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (খ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদপত্র (গ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র (ঘ) ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদপত্র

(ঙ) বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকত সনদপত্র (চ) এফিডেভিড মূলে ফার্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকানা ঘোষণাপত্র (ছ) প্রতিনিধির ক্ষেত্রে ফার্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাডে

প্রতিনিধির স্বাক্ষর সত্যায়নসহ ক্ষমতা অর্পণ দিতে হবে (জ) ১ম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সকল দলিল পত্রাদিসহ ফার্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে

২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে ফোর্সের ১ম কোয়ার্টারের প্যাকেটকৃত ২০২১খিঃ পর্যন্ত) উন্নতমানের ছোটদানা মণ্ডর ডাল (দেশী) সরবরাহ কাজ

১৯। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী জনাব মোহাম্মদ সারওয়ার আলম, কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি) ২০। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ ২১। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার সাথে যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম ফোন-০৯০২৮-৭৫৩৪৪, ফ্যাক্স-০৯০২৮-৭৫২০১ ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন

গ) দরপত্রে উল্লেখিত আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে। ঘ) দরপত্র দাখিল সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্যাবলী দরপত্র গ্রহণকালে অফিস হতে এবং দরপত্র তফসিলে পাওয়া যাবে। ঙ) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত প্রতিটি কাজের জন্য পৃথক পৃথক খামে পৃথক পৃথকভাবে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। চ) দরপত্র পিপিআর/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।

