

Ocean, future's nutrition hub

SHYKH SERAJ

Food is related with hunger. For years, people have struggled and innovated many ways to battle with hunger. The food habit has been changing for ages, and the issue of nutrition has gradually risen in this process...



A researcher working on a variety of seaweeds at a laboratory in Cox's Bazar's Nuniachhara area.

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.



The length of the coastline of Bangladesh is about 710 kilometre. Moreover, seaweed can be cultivated in 25,000 square kilometre area under 146 upazilas of 19 out of 64 districts of the country.

In 2005, I had the opportunity to visit Japan to film an episode of Hridaye Mati O Manush (Soil & People in Heart). There I saw seaweed being cultivated along the long sea shores of the Tokyo ocean.

In a large part of the shop, there was a seaweed section, filled with different seaweed food products. I had to believe, Chinese were really too fond of seaweed.

Professor Chun Liu of the Department of Fisheries at the university was researching on the number of species of fish in the ocean. To determine from which part of the sea, fish can be netted and from where it cannot be, research on fish growth, mortality, density etc.

Professor Liu said there are two types of fish, farmed and fish from natural resources, supply in China to meet the demand. The demand for marine fish is very high. The government has enacted strict laws to protect sea fish species.

marine life in many parts of the world, Professor Liu said the governments of the countries have a responsibility to work on this matter, together.

The Bay of Bengal accounts for 81 percent of the total area of our country. In the context of increasing the size of the sea, new possibilities have arisen with our blue economy. International researchers in the field of oceanography see this potential in our country as promising one.

The whole world is now talking about the protection of marine resources. Because the sea is gradually turning into waste and plastic mines. Scientists fear that by 2025, the figure could reach to such a dire level that one tonne of plastic waste will be found in the sea for every three tonnes of fish.

CHINA DOWARI A fish trap raising alarm

KONGKON KARMAKER

Years of efforts by the government in protecting aquatic life through banning the use of 'current net' in waterbodies of the country will go in vain unless the use of 'China Dowari' fish trap -- growing increasingly popular in Rangpur region -- is barred as well.

The new cheaper and stronger trap with finer net is more harmful than 'current net', according to officials at the Department of Fisheries.

Even the smallest of fish and other organisms are not spared when China Dowari is used in fishing, they also said.

Bigger catch, durability and affordability are among the reasons for growing popularity of this trap, which is not yet illegal in the country, said many fishers.

Rampant use of China Dowari in the Teesta river was witnessed by this correspondent during a visit to different areas in Gangachara upazila of Rangpur recently.



A fisher in Alaler Char of Rangpur's Gangachara upazila unwinds a China Dowari trap before going fishing.

Abdul Kuddus, from Alaler Char in the upazila, said after hearing about the "specially designed fishing trap", he recently bought 60 feet of it from Bogura. "It is comparatively better than 'current net'" as it catches fish of all sizes.

Another fisher, Ayub Ali, from the same area, said his catch has been better this season since he spent Tk 10,000 on buying a China Dowari trap. Besides, the trap is much easier to handle, he also said.

Riverine People in Rangpur' founder Prof Tuhin Wadud, of Bangla Department at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, said the China Dowari traps fish of all sizes.

It is mainly being used in the Teesta river in Rangpur region where people, including officials of the administration as well as law enforcers, are still unaware of its harmful impact on fish population.

If such indiscriminate fishing with China Dowari trap continues in the peak fishing season, between the months of June and October, fish population in the Teesta will see a sharp decline, he warned.

Mosaddek Ali Azad, chairman of Morneya Union Parishad in Gangachara upazila, said he never heard about the China Dowari trap and he would take necessary steps to restrict the use of the harmful trap.

Contacted, Deepa Rani Biswas, senior fisheries officer in the upazila, said she was also not aware of such a harmful fish trap.

The higher authorities would be informed of its negative impact and she would take necessary measures as per their directives, she added.



Members of Kuakata Dolphin Conservation Committee found another dead dolphin from the Kuakata beach area yesterday. According to the organisation, 15 dead dolphins have been spotted in different areas of the beach since January this year.

PHOTO: STAR

Advertisement for Bangladesh Bank (বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক) featuring a recruitment notice with details on application forms, fees, and exam dates.

Advertisement for Government of Bangladesh (গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার) regarding recruitment for the Police (পুলিশ) department with detailed exam information.