Workers at a fish farm in Hasanpur village under Khulna's Dumuria upazila are seen catching Pabdah catfish, which are currently selling for about Tk 13,000 per maund (roughly 37 kg). Md Alauddin Zoardar, who owns the pond, was the district's first to start farming this breed of catfish in the saline-prone area. PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

AQUACULTURE IN KHULNA

# Pioneer of Pabda farming leads the way for locals

**DIPANKAR ROY,** *Khulna*

Md Alauddin Zoardar of Hasanpur village under Khulna's Dumuria upazila has become a pioneer in fish farming by cultivating Pabdah catfish, locally known as Pabda, in a saline prone area of the region.

Locals say Alauddin was the first among them to start farming Pabda, which is particularly impressive given the fact that this species of catfish is a freshwater breed.

He now sells Pabda worth Tk 50-60 lakh each year with some of the fish grown in his pond even being exported to India for the last few years.

Seeing his success, many people in the district's southwestern region are now investing in Pabda cultivation.

However, this success did not come overnight as he had previously tried and failed at shrimp farming.

"You do not get good quality shrimp fry in this region and the government has banned collecting them from open sources such as rivers," he said.

And just when Alauddin found himself in deep despair, some people on a visit from Mymensingh encouraged locals of the village to cultivate certain breeds of catfish, which are generally grown in plain land with sweet water.

He then mustered up the courage to have another go at aquaculture and travelled to Mymensingh in 2016 to buy 1 lakh Pabda fry.

In addition, he purchased 70,000 Barbel fry and another 1 lakh fry of two catfish breeds.

"But it was a challenge to cultivate Pabda in a saline-prone area and due to the lack of experience, I fell into losses at first," Alauddin said.

He went on to say that the biggest difficulty in farming Pabda is that they tend to eat any smaller fish in the pond.

"Since I gave Barbels and Pabda in the same pond, the big Pabda ate the Barbels and smaller catfish as well," he added.

In the end, he was left with just 5,000 Pabda that sold for Tk 650 per kilogramme (kg). As such, Alauddin incurred losses of Tk 3.5 lakh that year.

"But I didn't give up and despite my family's discontent, I cultivated another 1 lakh Pabda again in 2017," he said.

About 85 per cent of the Pabda ultimately survived and once again sold for Tk 650 per kg, earning him a profit of around Tk 3 lakh.

Then in 2018, Alauddin decided to start fish farming on a large scale and with advice from the local fisheries officer, he leased 10 bighas of land for five years at Tk 5 lakh per annum.

Alauddin then bought 5 lakh Pabda fry from Bogura that same year and started farming them alongside some 10,000 carps.

After spending a total of Tk 27 lakh in 2021, he sold Pabda worth Tk 17 lakh in one day while his entire catch that year earned about Tk 50 lakh.

Tito Molla, an entrepreneur of Damodar village under Phultala upazila, bought fish from Alauddin last year and exported it to India. Other buyers did the same that year, when around 225 maunds of fish from his ponds were exported to India.

"Already 230 maunds have been exported this year," Alauddin said.

During a recent visit to the farm, it was seen that 5 aerators are constantly running to maintain the water's oxygen supply while four workers were busy sprinkling fish feed and keeping the ponds clean.

"I spent Tk 60-65 lakh on cultivation and already sold Tk 58 lakh worth of fish in three stages," added Alauddin, who expects to earn another Tk 50 lakh from his current stock.

Pabda is currently selling for Tk 13,000 per maund (roughly 37 kg).

Alauddin then said Pabda farming has great potential in the region as they can be cultivated thrice a year.

However, the problem lies elsewhere as the region does not have natural freshwater ponds and plain lands. Besides, Pabda needs ponds that are at least 6-7 feet deep in order to thrive, he added.

Joydeb Paul, district fisheries officer of Khulna, told The Daily Star that they are trying to inspire fish farmers in the district to cultivate some 60 species of local fish. And like Alauddin, many are now farming freshwater fish in the saline prone area.

"We are encouraging Pabda cultivation to meet the nutritional needs of people, solve unemployment problems, achieve financial prosperity and earn foreign exchange," he said.

# ICT division cancels 17 programmes to cut costs

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

The ICT division of the ministry of posts, telecommunications and information technology cancelled a total of 17 programmes as part of its cost-cutting measures amid the global economic downturn.

The division will also send back Tk 40 crore to the finance division as part of the measures.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for ICT, shared the information at a virtual press conference yesterday.

"We are trying to trim the events, which were supposed to be organised by the ICT division during fiscal 2023," said Palak.

During the fiscal year, the budget allocation to the ICT division for organising different programmes was Tk 75 crore.

If the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC), one of the most prestigious international contests for solving computer programming problems for university-level students, was not organised, more Tk 30 crore could be refunded, the ICT Division mentioned in a statement citing Palak.

Palak said the decision of organising ICPC was taken in 2017. The ICT Division is also trying to reduce its overall spending, he added.

# Dealing with a bad boss

**MAHTAB UDDIN AHMED**

It is common that when a boss cracks a poor joke, we all laugh our hearts out.

One day, a boss was doing the same at a gathering, where everyone in the team laughed except one guy who used to laugh the most in the past. The boss got confused and asked the guy: "Didn't you understand my joke? Are you ok?"

The guy confidently responded: "Sir, I resigned yesterday."

Bosses are of different breeds. Hence, don't follow them blindly.

Once a crow sat on a tree doing nothing and watching him, and a rabbit thought to do the same and sat on the ground. A fox came and ate him. The moral of the story is, in order to replicate the boss, you need to be on the top of the organisation pyramid.

According to the most recent Gallup "State of the Global Workplace" study, half of all employees in the US have quit jobs at some point in their careers in order to get away from their bosses. And the figure is expected to be higher in our part of the world.

What are the common traits of bad bosses? These traits include micromanagement, skipping performance reviews, providing no guidance, getting involved in office politics, stealing credit of the team, blaming others, not sharing information, being defensive to feedback, considering debate an offence, rarely appreciating team members, being busy managing his own boss and so on.

One's work and performance can be heavily impacted if the relationship with the boss is strained. Boss issues arise from multiple factors. It may be so that the boss has all or some of the above-mentioned traits.

Sometimes it could be because you lost their trust or you failed to put enough effort to mend the relationship.

Whatever the reason is, it is always the subordinates who bear the brunt of the stress, anxiety and mental agony. What is common in such a situation is that the stressed subordinate goes around spreading negativity across the organisation.

Hence, the onus of managing the situation is often with the employee, as the boss usually does not care, and the HR plays safe!

Having an effective relationship, personal engagement and proactive approach with your superior is critical to your career progression and business performance. Since the onus is with the employee, it is important to take charge of the situation, assess the problem, look for areas of alignment or commonality including (like hobby, workstyle etc), focus more on your boss's strengths than shortcomings, take initiative to engage both at professional and personal levels, and seek boss's guidance.

There are also the common cheap but effective tactics like complimenting your boss, laughing at his flat jokes and figuring out what pleases him no matter how silly it may seem.

But if you don't see any improvement in the relationship after all such efforts, it is better to look for a job instead of prolonging the mental agony.

The boss-subordinate relationship is one of the key factors that can help an organisation reach new heights. Many studies have proven that a good working environment and people's motivation have a direct contribution to business performance.

If all employees work towards the same goal, then why not the boss, employees, boards and HR work together to drive a conducive working environment. Always remember: "The boss is as good as his team. if your team looks good, you (the boss) look good too."

*The author is a telecom and management expert.*

# 230 accounts of MFS providers frozen for hundi involvement

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) on Wednesday froze 230 accounts of several mobile financial service providers as the account holders were allegedly involved in hundi.

Remittance inflow to Bangladesh recently decreased significantly despite a record number of workers having gone abroad in recent time.

An official of BIFU, on condition of anonymity, said that sending money from abroad might have recently increased through hundi cartel, an illegal cross-border financial transaction system.

Under such a situation, remittances through formal channels have decreased.

The BFIU will beef up its monitoring on hundi more in the days ahead such that remittances increase through the banking channel. In addition, legal action will be taken against the persons involved in hundi.

Remittances to Bangladesh declined 7.4 per cent year-on-year to $1.52 billion in October. October's receipts were also 1 per cent lower than in the preceding month.

Remittance dropped 2.03 per cent year-on-year to $7.19 billion in the first four months of the current fiscal year, data from the Bangladesh Bank showed yesterday.

The poor show in the remittance sector came despite 8.75 lakh migrant workers leaving the country for jobs in the first nine months of 2022. The figure was 6.17 lakh in 2021 and 2.17 lakh in 2020.

The four-day exposition that began yesterday at the GEC Convention Center in Chattogram city is offering solutions for the real estate sector, including interior design and construction materials. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# Fair focusing on real estate opens in Ctg

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT,** *Ctg*

A four-day exposition focusing on the real estate sector opened at GEC Convention Center in Chattogram city yesterday offering cars, iPhones and cashbacks of up to 40 per cent on flat, furniture and lifestyle product purchases.

The "P2P (Plan to Perfection) Build Expo 2022" will provide all types of consultancy services of skilled and experienced engineers, ranging from design of a building to complete

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# Correction

In a report headlined "Akij takes first step into local cake market" published on November 16, the brand name of biscuits was mistakenly mentioned as Bakerman's. Actually, the name is Bakeman's. We regret the error.