

## The economics of shutki trade



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The *aradars* then sell the products to the other shutki shops. People may also buy shutki directly from the *aradars*. Transportation, as well as packaging facilities, are available of course, for a price.

More than 40 different kinds of shutki are available here, which include, but are not limited to churri, loitta, icha, lakha, poa, salmon, rupchanda, painsha, kata, hilsa, salmon, moilla,

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etc. If you can name it, they have it!

Shutki is brought here from Cox’s Bazar, Saint Martin’s Island, Rangbali, Sonadia, Kutubdia, Teknaf, Banshkhali, Anowara, and Maheshkhali.

There are a number of other shutki hubs in Bangladesh such as Syedpur, Massimpur, Bishwanath Fish Market, and Noapara. After Dhaka and Asadganj, Syedpur has the next big shutki market in the country.

Syedpur traders buy shutki from all across the country. Small species like puti and chanda come from the northern districts where freshwater shutki dominates. For the marine fish, they resort to the southern districts. The traders maintain regular interactions with their Chattagram’s counterparts.

This is how they collect local as well as imported variants, which come from countries like Myanmar and India. Within the country, Syedpur provides

supplies of feed meal (poultry feed and such) which is reliant on the shutki trade for its high protein content.

### NEW POSSIBILITIES

Like all business, even the shutki trade has found a spot in the online marketplace. There are hundreds of small businesses and online shops from where one can order shutki. Home delivery service is being provided by most of them. Even dealers from big wholesale markets such as Asadganj and Syedpur are taking orders online.

“First, we wanted to launch a physical outlet and then move online but somehow we ended up doing it the other way around,” said Mizanur Rahman, Managing Partner and administrator of Shutkibazar.com, an online shutki shop who claims to be the biggest one in the country.

“We’re the biggest in the sense that

we have the biggest collection. Any shutki you want, just let us know and we will deliver. And of course, if you do not like the product, you can return it,” Rahman added.

He admitting that the COVID-19 blow was a difficult one but they are planning on opening multiple outlets all over the country.

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Export possibilities of shutki are not new concepts and Bangladesh is already shipping a few different species of shutki to the UK, US, and middle-eastern countries. At least 20,000 workers get involved in Nazirartek

Shutki Palli in Cox’s Bazar during the production season. So, the dried fish trade is creating job opportunities as well as earning foreign revenue. Yet, this trade has not bloomed quite as much as one might expect.

It appears that there is high demand, possibilities and popularity of dried fish inside the country as well as abroad, but the shutki we produce is not even enough to meet the local demand. In fact, it’s barely 70 per cent and the rest are imported from India, Pakistan, and Myanmar. With proper supervision and investment, it is possible to meet the challenge. The time has come to cast a look in the direction of this trade and consider the future it might hold should it get proper support from the authorities.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro  
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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