

Bangladesh

Virtual roundtable

‘Concerted efforts needed to increase fish production’

Staff Correspondent Dhaka



Bangladesh is among the top world producers of fish from rivers, ponds and other water bodies. Yet a large section of the poor people in the country cannot avail an adequate amount of fish. We have managed to harness large volumes of fish by settling the maritime boundary dispute, but we have the potential to catch even double the amount. That is why concerted efforts of various government organisations and the private sector are needed alongside the fisheries department to increase fish production. This will prove the Bay of Bengal to be a treasure trove of fish and biodiversity.

These observations were made at a virtual roundtable on ‘Marine biodiversity, ocean economy and welfare of fishermen’. The roundtable held on Thursday was organised jointly by Prothom Alo and WorldFish Bangladesh.

Speaking at the meeting, former vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Abdus Sattar Mandal said that the settlement of the maritime boundary had created limitless possibilities for us. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) also spoke of using ocean resources. Bangladesh is part of the eight-nation Bay of Bengal project. Bangladesh will receive cooperation in the removal of heavy metal pollution in the coastal areas. It also spoke of an ocean resources survey and harnessing resources as part of the Delta Plan.



Abdus Sattar Mandal

Abdus Sattar Mandal said our seventh five-year plan places importance on inland fresh water fish cultivation. We have an intake of 66 grams of fish, but even then the poor people, urban and rural, do not get an adequate amount of fish.

Every year in the country 660,000 tonnes of ocean resources were harvested. It would be possible to increase this to 1.3 million tonnes

The price of fish has not increased since the year 2000 and so the question was, why should the private sector entrepreneurs be interested to invest in fish production? We can

capture sea fish for the export market.

Team leader of the international organisation WorldFish Bangladesh's Eco-Fish 2 project, professor Abdul Wahab, said that hilsa played a significant role in increasing Bangladesh's total fish production. The government provides fishermen with assistance during the season when catching hilsa (ilish) and jatka (small hilsa) was banned. As a result, jatka and fish with eggs were not caught and hilsa production increased. However, he said, the marine fishing ban need to be considered further based on scientific information and needs fine tuning in regard to start and end date and it's duration.



Abdul Wahab

The law enforcement agencies and the media played a good role in protecting hilsa. Ever year in the country 660,000 tonnes of ocean resources were harvested. It would be possible to increase this to 1.3 million tonnes.

Abdul Wahab went on to say, WorldFish Bangladesh was implementing the USAID-funded Enhanced Coastal Fisheries in Bangladesh (Eco Fish 2) project. This was being implemented in 36 upazilas of 12 districts of the country with the assistance of the

fisheries department and other partners. Under the project, work was being carried out on the protection of marine biodiversity in the Cox's Bazar coastal region, the Meghna estuary and the Nijhum Dwip marine protected area, improving the lives and livelihood of the fishermen, and women's empowerment.



Sayed Arif Azad

Former director general of the fisheries department Sayed Arif Azad said the scientific research of WorldFish had a significant contribution to the increase in hilsa production. However, we still were behind in shrimps. Exporters were unwilling to spend Tk 500 in virus tests for shrimp farming, but would eventually pay Tk 50,000 in fines. Such reasons held back our shrimp cultivation.

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Hilsa use the river Meghna to go to the sea. If we cannot protect the rivers from pollution, all efforts to step up fish production will fail

Niamul Naser, professor of biology at Dhaka University

The Sundarbans was a huge protection for our marine resources. But excessive fish was being caught there and illegal fishing nets were being used because the fisheries department had no programme there. The forest department was controlling this alone and so we were deprived of a lot of technical support to protect the resources there.

Team leader of WorldFish's climate change programme, Esham Yeasin Muhammad, said as in other countries, climate change was having an impact on Bangladesh's ocean resources too. Research and scientific information and data were required to tackle this or Bangladesh would lose the opportunity to harness the marine resources.



Esham Yeasin Muhammad

In his opening speech, Prothom Alo's associate editor Abdul Quayum said, we rank among the top fish producers in the world. We will go further ahead if we can harness our marine resources properly.

Professor of biology at Dhaka University, Niamul Naser, said that hilsa use the river Meghna to go to the sea. If we cannot protect the rivers from pollution, all efforts to step up fish production will fail. Pesticides and industrial waste were polluting rivers and other bodies of water. This is entering the bodies of the fish. Unless hilsa sanctuaries were protected, production could fall again.

Bangladesh country director of IUCN, Raquibul Amin said management must be built up to protect Bay of Bengal's Swatch of No Ground. Just declaring it a protected zone was not enough. All the government agencies would have to work together to protect the zone. Most of the fishermen were poor. They can't be stopped from going to sea unless they were provided with support.

Chairman of Prokriti O Jibon Foundation, Mukit Majumdar Babu, said in many countries excessive catching of fish had destroyed the biodiversity. We must take care not to do the same.

Senior scientist of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Md Enamul Hoq, said that some of our fish is being caught in excess from the Bay of Bengal. This could drive fish like poa, lakhya and chanda towards extinction.

The virtual roundtable was moderated by assistant editor of Prothom Alo, Firoz Choudhury. He said, we have taken care to increase the production of hilsa. We can catch sea fish too while protecting biodiversity. We can also protect the interests of the fishermen.

At the outset of the meeting, the participants paid respects to Bangabandhu and his family members in commemoration of the month of mourning.

Bangladesh

CUET teacher pursuing PhD in US passes away



Prothom Alo English Desk

Avijit Hira, an assistant professor of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) pursuing PhD at Marquette University in Wisconsin, passed away in the USA on Thursday, reports UNB.

He "died unexpectedly" inside of E-Hall on Thursday morning (local time), according to Marquette Wire, the official outlet of the university's student media.

In an email to Marquette students, faculty and staff, the university's president Michael

Lovell described Hira as a gifted scholar, highlighting his research in wireless networks and encryption technology. He had completed 12 publications.

The university was scheduled to host a "Prayer Service of Remembrance" for Hira on Friday.

CUET public relations officer Rashedul Islam told UNB that Hira taught at the Department of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering and went to the USA in 2019 to pursue PhD at Marquette University.

Avijit Hira, the son of Miran Kanti Hira of Tuthamandra village in Gopalganj district, was 27 at the time of his death.

CUET vice-chancellor Mohammad Rafiqul Alam expressed profound shock at the demise of the young teacher. "Avijit Hira was a talented teacher. His death caused an irreparable loss to CUET," said Alam.

The CUET Teachers' Association also mourned the demise of their colleague.

A memorial discussion will be held on Monday next at the TSC auditorium of CUET, the university authorities said.

Bangladesh

South Korean envoy visits Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar



Diplomatic Correspondent Dhaka

South Korean ambassador in Dhaka Lee Jang-keun visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. He met representatives of the UN agencies, international donor organisations and the local administration in Cox's Bazar and discussed how to step up collaboration to resolve the Rohingya crisis.

Lee Jang-keun told Prothom Alo on Thursday, “This is the first time I visited Cox’s Bazar to see the Rohingya crisis since I came to Dhaka in July last year. I got an overall idea on the crisis through this visit.”

The Korean embassy in Dhaka, in a statement on Wednesday, said ambassador Lee Jang-keun visited Cox’s Bazar from 14 to 17 February to oversee the refuge and host community programmes assisted by Korea through international agencies.

It said, Korea has been contributing annually four to five million US dollars to the international organizations based in Bangladesh for assisting their humanitarian efforts to address the largest global refugee crisis of Rohingyas. In 2020, the Republic of Korea contributed 4 million US dollars to UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, WFP, and IFRC offices in Bangladesh, it reads.

The statement further said on 15 February, ambassador Lee, with the guidance of representatives of IOM (International Organization for Migration) and WFP (World Food Program), visited Cox’s Bazar Rohingya refugee camp and engaged with humanitarian workers and the Rohingya refugees.

He visited the COVID-19 Isolation and Treatment Center (ICT), Women and Girls Safe Space (WGSS), Shelter Distribution Center, LPG Depot, Site Management Hub, E-voucher Outlet, and Fresh Food Corner, WFP Logistics Hub and Host Community of Kulalpara, Rajapalong. KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) Dhaka office representative, Do Yong-Ah also joined this visit.

Ambassador Lee also held various meetings with UN agencies in Cox’s Bazar, including IOM, WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF, and was briefed on activities of the organisations in the camp and host community, and discussed how to improve collaborations for resolving the refuge challenges.

During the visit, Ambassador Lee also met with local authorities of Bangladesh including Md Mamunur Rashid, deputy commissioner of Cox’s Bazar, and Shah Rezwana Hayat, Refugee Relief and Repatriation commissioner. He also held meetings with Korean NGO members and business people working in the Cox’s Bazar area.

Prior to visiting Cox’s Bazar, ambassador Lee visited Maheshkhali Island on 14 February and inspected the tripartite project of IOM, Korea Telecom, and KOICA to establish a high-speed communication network on the island providing platforms for education, health and e-commerce services to the inhabitants, according to the statement.

● Live

Coronavirus: Bangladesh



Prothom Alo English Desk

— 4:22:30 PM

Q **Confirmed**

542,674

Q **Recovered**

490,468

Q **Deaths**

8,337



[Bangladesh](#)
Covid-19

Bangladesh reports 8 deaths, 406 cases



Staff Correspondent

The number of detected novel coronavirus cases in Bangladesh, according to the government, on Friday rose to 542,674 as 406 more cases were reported, after testing 14,232 samples, including rapid antigen tests, in the last 24 hours.

During that time eight more COVID-19 patients died, raising the total deaths in the country to 8,337, said a press release of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) today.

The rate of detection in the last 24 hours until 8:00am was 2.85 per cent, while the overall rate of detection of infected cases in Bangladesh as of Friday stands at 13.83 per cent.

The health directorate today said a total of 536 people were recovered from the highly infectious disease in the last 24 hours, taking the number of total recovery to 490,468.

The overall rate of people recovered as of today stands at 90.38 per cent while the rate of death is 1.54 per cent, it added.

Of the people died in the last 24 hours, six were male and two female. Of the total deaths so far, 6,311 were male (75.70 per cent) and 2,026 female (24.30 per cent).

All of the eight patients died in the last 24 hours breathed their last at different hospitals.

A total of 14,438 samples were collected in the last 24 hours. As of Friday, the number of samples tested in Bangladesh stands at 39,22,489.

Bangladesh detected first coronavirus patient on 8 March and recorded first death on 18 March.

Bangladesh

Tokyo-Dhaka focusing on infrastructure, business ties: Envoy



Prothom Alo English Desk Dhaka

Japanese ambassador Ito Naoki has said Bangladesh and Japan are currently focusing more on infrastructure development and business partnership under the "BIG-B" initiative, reports UNB.

He made remarks at a lecture series while describing the friendship and partnership between Japan and Bangladesh in a number of areas including Matarbari deep sea-port, Dhaka Metro and Terminal 3 of Dhaka airport.

Once completed, the ambassador said, these mega-infrastructures will change the face of the country and would have positive impact on the future of Bangladesh as well as the landscape of Japan-Bangladesh relations.

In parallel to these business and economic partnership, it is also important to foster mutual understanding and academic interactions, he said.

The ministry of foreign affairs, Japan and the East Asia Study Center, Dhaka University jointly launched two-session online lecture series titled "Japan Lecture Series" on Wednesday.

"I hope this Japan Lecture Series will be able to contribute to the deepening of the mutual understanding of people of Japan and Bangladesh," the ambassador said.

"This year we'll celebrate the 50th anniversary of independence of Bangladesh. The following year, 2022, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bangladesh. It's my earnest hope that the interactions between our two countries will be enhanced in these milestone years."

After the speech of ambassador Naoki, professor Ohashi Masaaki of University of the Sacred Heart, Japan gave a lecture titled "NGOs for International Cooperation in Japan and its Relations with the Japan Government and Academia".

More than 100 people, including students and faculty members of Dhaka University, participated in this online seminar live.

In the second session of the series which is scheduled for 25 February from 10:30am to 12pm, professor Oiwa Takaaki of JICA Research Institute will give a lecture titled "Deconstruction of Regions: The Emerging Role of Subregional Cooperation in Asia".

The second session will also be available online for anyone through Facebook live.



