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Thrust on tapping potentials of blue economy

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State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Md Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru addressing a workshop on 'Bangladesh Blue Economy Dialogue on Fisheries and Mariculture' as the chief guest at a city hotel on Tuesday — FE Photo

Bangladesh is yet to tap the immense potentials of blue economy like marine aquaculture and fishing, experts said at a dialogue on Tuesday.

They underscored the need for conducting more research, popularising marine fishes and other sea foods among the people of the country and enhancing the stakeholders' capacity.

The views came at a technical session of a two-day event titled 'Bangladesh Blue Economy Dialogue on Marine Fisheries and Mariculture', which began at a city hotel on the day.

Mariculture is a method of growing fish, herbs and other produces within enclosed floating structure in the open ocean.

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) jointly organised the programme.

The session titled 'Operationalising the Blue Economy - Optimising Performance in Existing and Emerging Marine Fisheries and Mariculture Sectors' was chaired by Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office Sajjadul Hassan.

The session was attended by experts including the FAO consultant Paul Fanning, executive secretary of Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Chris O'Brien and Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) Professor Mostafa Hossain.

Mr Hossain made a presentation on 'Mariculture in Bangladesh - Opportunities and Barriers'.

According to it, there is a growing local market for the sea food along with a well developed export market, which is a great opportunity for the sector.

Fisheries sector makes around 4.0 per cent of Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) while marine resources could contribute even more. "Coastal aquaculture contributes only 11 per cent of all aquaculture output. It thus offers a significant scope for growth," it said.

Marine fish production was only 0.637 million tonnes in 2015-16, taken mainly from the near-shore areas and far less than the other Bay of Bengal countries, it added.

It suggested boosting productivity by domesticating new marine species.

Other speakers recommended adopting modern technologies, following success stories of other countries and addressing the risk issues.

They also said that it is a high time for the country to focus on utilising the marine resources in a great deal.

saif.febd@gmail.com

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