

Staff Reporter

The Cabinet on Monday approved the draft of the 'National Shrimp Policy 2014', aiming to boost shrimp production and thus raise export earnings since shrimp plays an important role in the country's economy.

The approval came from the regular weekly meeting of the Cabinet held at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said the country's shrimp production will get a boost with the implementation of this policy, and there will be improvement in its qualitative standard, flourishing this industry, increasing employment opportunities and thus alleviating poverty and raising export earnings.

Ultimately, he said, it will make a significant contribution towards meeting up the nutrition demand of the country's people.

The Cabinet Secretary said the shrimp sector is very important in the country's economic context as about 1.50 crore people, including women, are employed in it with shrimp export fetching TK 3,376 crore in the last fiscal year.

Musharraf said although shrimp was included in the National Fisheries Policy formulated in 1998, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock felt that the indicative guidelines over shrimp in that policy was inadequate, while there is a need for a big and full-fledged policy over shrimp. The main goals of the National Shrimp Policy, 2014 are to help maintain environmental and ecological balance, protect biodiversity, improve public health and nutrition, generate employment, empower women, boost shrimp production, process and market shrimp, expand its export market and accelerate the overall economic growth.

He said the policy has focused on all the issues, problems and prospects over shrimp.

Highlighting some features of the policy, the Cabinet Secretary said in the policy, shrimp has been dealt with a holistic manner with focus on the development of the shrimp industry, boosting production, imparting training, expanding the sector, controlling the quality, protecting biodiversity, diversifying crops, rotating crops, zoning lands and crops and conducting researches.

He said the policy got the Cabinet nod following discussions with various ministries and divisions, experts, and other stakeholders, including the owners of shrimp enclosures and hatcheries as well as holding workshops.

As per the policy, Musharraf said, the private sector will be the driving force in the country's shrimp sector while the government will act as the catalyst.

The Cabinet meeting was also apprised about the participation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the first-ever Girl Summit held in London on July 21-23, 2014, about the participation of the Foreign Minister in the 17th session of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Conference held at Algiers on May 28-29, 2014 and about the participation of the Fisheries and Livestock Minister in the 31st Session of the COFI (Committee on Fisheries) held in Rome on June 9-13, 2014.

Ministers, State Ministers and Secretaries concerned attended the meeting.